



# LOVES OF THE HAREM

OR

A TALE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

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BY

George W. M. REYNOLDS

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**THE  
LOVES OF THE HAREM**

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A TALE OF CONSTANTINOPLE**

**G. W. M. REYNOLDS**

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# THE LOVES OF THE HAREM

## PART THE SECOND

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### CHAPTER XIX.

#### KHALIL'S FIFTH STORY

MY tale opens in the year 1488 of the Christian era, and 888 of the Mussulman Calendar. At that period, the Castle of Sassenage, in the province of Dauphiny, in France, was the prison in which the treachery of the Knights of Rhodes had confined Prince Djem, or Zizim, by which latter appellation, although an incorrect one, he is more familiarly known to Christian readers. Djem was the younger son of Mohammed the Second; and at the death of his father, contested the throne of the Ottoman empire with his elder brother Bayezid. The fortune of war decided in favour of the latter, who became the Eighth Sultan, under the name of Bayezid the Second. Djem was compelled to take refuge at Rhodes, whence the intrigues of his successful brother's agents compelled him to fly to Italy; and after a variety of adventures and strange vicissitudes, he was at length imprisoned in the Castle of Sassenage.

Prince Djem was a young man whom I must rather denominate beautiful than handsome. At the period, when he was taken as a

countenance, failed not to inspire with interest all who came in contact with him. Contrary to the custom of his country, he wore no beard; and, as he attired in the garb then in fashion in the more civilized states of Christendom, he rather resembled an elegant noble of the meridian of Paris, than a descendant of the fierce and warlike Osman.

He was passionately devoted to music and poetry—those twin-sisters, whose united charms exercise a soothing influence over even the most rude and uncultivated minds. In manner and disposition the Prince was also unlike his fellow-countrymen being mild, amiable and even fascinating—his conversation was agreeable and polished, and showed an enlightened mind—his taste for painting and sculpture was as refined as his devotion to the sister arts above mentioned; and his opinions were divested of those prejudices and dark superstitions, which in those ages, shed such gloom over the character of the rigid Mussulman.

The Castellan or Lord of Sassenage was a widower. He possessed a daughter, of extreme beauty, whose name was Philippina Helena. At the period when

nity. Her father, destined her for the youthful, the gallant, and the wealthy Alberti de Morestel, the proprietor of a splendid abode and woodlands at a short distance from Sassenage. Philippina was, however, averse to the match which her father had contracted in her behalf: she was not blind to the merits of her admirer; but there was something rude and repulsive in his character, which threw all his real qualifications into the shade. He was moreover of dissipated habits; and when he returned with his companions from the chase, the halls of his spacious castle rang with the noise of revelry, and the shouts of the wassailers, till the crowing of the cock. These circumstances made an unfavourable impression upon the mind of the fair Philippina, who was herself all gentleness, and amiability.

From the preceding observations you will be prepared for the announcement that the beautiful daughter of the Castellan soon captivated the heart of Djem, and was also imbued with a reciprocal passion. Their tastes were so assimilated—their dispositions so congenial, that they almost seemed to have been formed for each other, had not the difference of their religious persuasions constituted an insuperable barrier between them, in an age when so much importance was attached to particular sectarian tenets. Djem was treated by the Castellan with the utmost distinction and respect, and lived in the fortress as a member of his family. He was

tains, the young lovers had every opportunity of becoming well acquainted with each other, and improving the attachment which had sprung up between them.

There was something so pure, so chaste, and so holy in this love, that not even the most rigid moralist could have objected to that silent union of two fond hearts. This sincere affection was not for a long time revealed by the lips to each other; but it was mutually betrayed by tender glances, and those thousand little proofs of preference which invariably characterize true love, and speak, trumpet-tongued, louder than ten thousand voices. And yet the old Castellan himself remained blind to the attachment existing between his daughter and the prisoner,—probably because, with the instinctive apprehension of lovers, they were particularly guarded and even reserved in his presence; and also because the difference of their creeds might at once be considered, in the ideas of a worldly-minded and selfish old man, a sufficient guarantee against the interchange of sentiments of love.

One morning, about two months after the arrival of the Prince at the Castle of Sassenage, the Castellan summoned his daughter into his private apartment, and addressed her as follows:—

“Philippina, this evening I intend to give a grand entertainment to Count Alberti de Morestel, and other nobles of the neighbourhood. Thou knowest that for a year past, thy hand has been destined for the Count, who is deeply enamoured of thee. I

upon those who injured them,—and that his personal safety was seriously compromised by his behaviour.

He paced his room with anxious heart and uneven steps; and the adventures of the few past months of his existence rolled like a torrent to his memory. He seemed as if he were a solitary sailor, upon a frail bark, floating upon the surface of the ocean at the mercy of the winds and waves, without a companion to soothe his cares—but with a star burning brightly in the horizon, cheering him in the midst of that trackless way, and still holding out a promise—albeit a distant and uncertain one—of a neighbouring harbour of rest. Need it be said, that this star, which shone upon the gloom of the young prince's thoughts was the beauteous Philippina?—need we inform our readers that her image constantly filled his imagination, and alone reconciled him with existence?

Presently he remembered, and pondered seriously upon the origin of his dispute with Alberti de Morestal. He had deceived Philippina in respect to his real position; he had denied the existence of a wife who had tenderly loved him, and who had disposed of her jewels and rich ornaments to procure a sum which she supposed to be calculated to forward his views or contribute to his comforts;—the existence of this affectionate wife he had denied, and Alberti had betrayed him. He knew not—but he trembled when he reflected upon what might be the opinion Philippina had formed of his

ber. The footsteps of the mail-clad sentinel in the stone passage outside his door, fell with monotonous regularity upon his ears; and the deeper the night advanced, the more gloomy became the meditations of the forlorn but illustrious prisoner. It was therefore with a feeling of superstitious alarm that he beheld a panel of the wainscot suddenly slide back from its setting;—while at the same moment, a tall female form, carrying a lamp in one hand and a large bundle in the other, appeared in the narrow passage thus strangely and mysteriously revealed. Djem was a brave man: and his fears were only momentary. He recovered his self-possession, and immediately recognised the pale but beauteous countenance of Philippina, the Castellan's daughter.

He rushed forward to embrace her; but she shook her head mournfully, and advanced slowly into the apartment.

"Your Highness is surprised to see me at this hour, creeping from an avenue unknown to you," said Philippina, with a sickly smile.

"I am not surprised to see Philippina at a time when he who loves her so much needs her consolation and sympathy," answered Djem.

"My lord," said the maiden, firmly "mention not the name of love. I have been foolish—I have given way to the delusions of a delicious vision: but it is now past, and my eyes are opened to the dangers—the follies—the improprieties of the path which I was pursuing. And yet, God knows the innocence of my heart—the purity of my intention:—and your



nounce my love—reject my vows—”

“My lord, thou canst not plight thy vows with sincerity, nor can I listen to them with honour,” interrupted Philippina. “Thou hast deceived me, Djem—deceived one who put all confidence in thee! But I will not reproach—I came not hither for that purpose.”

“By Allah! I would rather that thou wouldst reproach—contemn—revile me, Philippina,” ejaculated the Mussalman, “than address me in a language which leaves no hope behind.”

“My lord,” exclaimed the Christian maiden, with a dignity which overawed the Prince, and compelled him to admire, in spite of himself the magnanimous behaviour of her whom he so tenderly loved: “I beseech—I command you to make no further allusion to the past. My determination is taken; and no power on earth shall change it. But listen to me with attention, while I explain the object of my present visit. Thou hast this night perpetrated a deed for which thy life will pay the penalty. Nay—do not lay your hand upon your belt—your sword is no longer there, and the absence of your weapon is the symbol of your defenceless state. The Knights of Rhodes are in league with thy brother, and detain thee a prisoner in pursuance of a treaty concluded with the Sultan. A pretext for thy death will gladly be laid hold of by those who are thus combined against thee. To-morrow morning my father purposes to deliver thee over to the authorities, who will

of half a league from the castle, on the high road to Morestal, is a small cottage, inhabited by my foster brother and his parents. A couple of steeds, already saddled, are now awaiting there the moment for departure. My foster-brother will accompany thee—hie thou to the dominions of the Pope:—his Holiness, as thou knowest is well disposed towards thee, and will gladly proclaim thy title in competition with that of thy brother, against whom he has serious causes of complaint;—and at the Vatican wilt thou find an asylum and honourable treatment. Make thy preparations, and hasten—time presses!”

“And thou, Philippina—what will become of thee, exposed to to the rage of thy father, when he shall have discovered my escape?” demanded Djem.

“I shall throw myself upon my knees before him to-morrow morning, and trust to his affection for forgiveness,” calmly replied the maiden.

But the guard—the sentinels—how shall we pass them unmolested?

My father was heated with wine and he sleeps soundly,” answered Philippina. “I stole into his chamber and possessed myself of his signet ring, which no inmate of these walls will venture to disobey. But your Highness must use despatch:—a long interval must be placed between thee and Sassenage ere to-morrow’s sun shall have risen upon the forest of Morestal.”

“No, I will not separate from thee, Philippina—I will dare death—everything, sooner than

"Ah! then thou art grieved to part with me!" ejaculated the Prince: and he clasped the maiden in his arms.

She tore herself from his embrace but her cheeks were diffused with blushes, her eyes downcast, and her lips trembling.

"Philippina," continued Djem after a moment's pause, during which an idea flashed across his mind; 'I will not attempt to deceive thee longer—I will not insult thee by endeavouring to persist in a falsity or sustain a delusion. Yes—I am married; and I know that this circumstance is a barrier in thine eyes, to our union. But thou wilt at least satisfy me with a hope—however distant—that, if the bond which attaches me to another should be broken by death—I may still—'

"Yes, you may entertain that hope," said Philippina "but alas!"

"Thou hast given me the hope—I shall live for that alone!" cried Djem, joyfully. "And now, thou shalt be my guiding genius—I am prepared to follow thy directions."

The Prince hastily packed up a few necessaries; and Philippina, having opened the bundle which she carried in her hand, displayed a complete suit of female attire. She then withdrew into the dark passage while Djem disguised himself in this apparel. In a few minutes these preliminary arrangements were accomplished; and the maiden conducted him through several narrow passages and low arched corridors, which at length brought them upon the very terrace where their vows had been plighted in the morn-

ing. At all events, the soldiers upon duty did not for one moment suspect that the Ottoman Prince was before them in the disguise of a female, as they well knew that sentinels were posted at the door of his apartment and in the chambers communicating therewith. The secret corridors were known only to the Castellan and his daughter; and the mystery of their existence was as hereditary in the family as the ancestral estate itself.

The Prince and his fair companion passed to the outer gate of the fortress; and then Philippina declared that they must separate.

"And thou wilt not accompany me, dear lady?" demanded Djem, in a plaintive tone.

"Insult not the Christian maiden with such an offer!" exclaimed Philippina.

"And will the Christian maiden remember her promise—that if the wife of Djem should die within a certain period——!"

"Name no limited period," interrupted Philippina firmly and in a dignified manner: "I am not a child, my lord, and will not conceal my feelings or my intentions at this moment of separation. I have confessed my attachment towards you; and I will now, with equal candour, declare before the God who hears my vow, and who will avenge you if I break it—that I will never espouse any other than him I love!"

"Thanks—a thousand thanks, beloved Philippina," said Djem. "Behold, upon the middle finger of each hand I possess a ring! those two rings are exactly similar, and are engraved with my

presence, and present thee with the companion ring to the one I now give thee; and that shall be a sign that thou mayst follow him whithersoever he may lead."

Philippina took the ring; and Djem embraced her tenderly. Let not the prudish maiden or the stern moralist marvel at this conduct on the part of my heroine;—for she loved—and she was but an animate atom of frail humanity after all;—and that self-same prudish maiden or too particular moralist would have done the same, had the one been the lovely Philippina, and the other the enraptured Djem.

The lovers bade each other adieu; and Djem proceeded to the forest of Morestel, by the way of Monthuel. He found the cottage of the foster-brother of his beloved Philippina; and the necessary arrangements for his flight were all made in the manner she had described. The Prince changed his garb at the cottage, and now appeared in the attire of one of the superior order of the local peasantry.

It is not however my purpose to dwell at any great length upon this portion of the narrative. The Prince was discovered in the neighbourhood of the town of Morestel, and was conveyed to the castle of the Lord of Bocalimi—a fortress situated upon the sea-shore.

The unfortunate Djem, whose recapture had taken place in consequence of the strict watch which the knights of Rhodes kept by means of their agents, not only upon him but also on those to whose custody he was entrusted, languished in his new place of incarceration for a period of two

D' Aubusson, the Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes, to procure the release of Djem—their object being to place him at the head of an expedition which Christendom meditated against the Ottoman crescent. But D' Aubusson, whose intrigues had effectually quashed and judicial inquiry into the assassination of the Count de Morestel—and whose aim was to retain the Moslem Prince in his power in consequence of the handsome revenue annually paid by the Sultan Bayezid for that purpose—for a long time defeated the projects of the leading monarchs of Christendom; and Djem still continued to languish in captivity.

In the year 1488, Djem was transferred to the custody of the Pope, the pontiff having granted several valuable privileges, and a heavy indemnity to the Knights of Rhodes, in order to induce them to resign their distinguished prisoner. D' Aubusson himself received the honour of the cardinal's hat—a dignity certainly eminent, but little compatible with the character of a warrior, and especially inconsistent with that of a sovereign. Bayezid despatched an ambassador to the Pope, to implore him to retain Djem in custody, and to make arrangements with respect to the sum to be paid for the expenses of the Prince; and when these matters were settled to the satisfaction of the Ottoman envoy he presented the Pope, in the name of the Sultan, with several valuable relics amongst which were the lance that had pierced the side of Jesus upon the cross, and the sponge in which the vinegar and gall were given to him to

nocent VII, Djem was treated with all the consideration due to his rank, his talents, and his misfortunes. At the death of this pontiff, the infamous Alexander Borgia mounted the papal throne; and Djem was then confined in the castle of Saint Angelo. But in the year 1494, King Charles VIII of France penetrated into Italy, at the head of the conquering chivalry of Gaul; and Alexander Borgia was compelled to sue for peace. Charles granted him his prayer, but upon the condition that the Ottoman prince should be given up to the power of France. The generous soul of the French monarch had been moved by the piteous tale, the tears, and the prayers of the unhappy sufferer; and he resolved to effect his emancipation from the hands of base and mercenary despots. Charles proceeded to Naples with his victorious army, and left Djem behind him at Rome, protected by a detachment of French men-at-arms and under a solemn pledge not to attempt an escape.

Alexander Borgia, whose avarice was defeated by the loss of the annual pension paid by the Sultan Bayezid, was still determined to turn the continued presence of the unhappy Prince in his capital to some account; and while the French monarch was occupied in subduing the south of Italy, he despatched an envoy to Constantinople to negotiate terms for the death of Djem. Bayezid hastened to conclude a bargain so advantageous to himself; and the Roman envoy returned to his master without a moment's delay, having only remained four-and-twenty hours in the Ottoman capital.

destination, with despatches for Djem. The contents of those documents were most important to his interests and most flattering to his hopes. They announced the death of his wife—the only link between him and Egypt—the only barrier between him and Philippina. If he lost, on the one hand, a means of communication with a friendly portion of the Mussalman world, he gained, on the other, the key to an avenue of happiness for which his heart had long panted. Ten years had elapsed since he left Sassenage—ten years of captivity since he had seen his well-beloved Philippina—ten years of doubt and uncertainty, fond anticipation, withering hope, and acute suspense. All that he had heard of the Castellan's daughter, during that tedious interval, was comprised in two words—namely, that she was alive and unwedded! Ah! how fondly did he cling to the idea that she remained faithful to her vows and plight to him!

The moment he received the despatches from the Sultan of Egypt, he entrusted them, together with his remaining signet-ring, to a faithful dependent named Hussein, and despatched him forthwith into Dauphiny. The instructions of the envoy were to obtain a private interview with the daughter of the Lord of Sassenage, present her with the testimonials of the Prince's permanent affection towards her, and claim the fulfilment of the promise she had made him upon the night of his departure from her father's castle.

Hussein arrived without accident at the fortalice of Sassenage. A few months previously the old

spectacle met the eyes of the faithful dependant when he entered the saloon where in the morning he had left the two lovers !

The corpse of Djem lay stretched upon the sofa, his brow bedecked with flowers, which the unhappy lady had taken for the mournful purpose from the vases in the balcony : and by his side—with her face turned towards his own, so that her last dying gaze might be fixed upon the countenance of him she adored—lay the faithful Philippina, cold and motionless, but still lovely and serene !

Near her was the golden goblet ; and the flask upon the table was found to be empty !

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## CHAPTER XX.

### ANOTHER NIGHT ADVENTURE.

IT was about midnight when Khalil's story was finished. Nothing could transcend the loveliness of the scene : the azure heaven, without even so much as a single speck of fleecy vapour upon it, was studded with countless stars, the silver lustre of which made the surface of the Bosphorus shine as if it were quicksilver. The air was still warm after the sultry heat of the day : and there was only just a sufficiency of the zephyr's breath to produce a slight rustling amongst the leaves. The air was perfumed with the fragrance of the roses suspended in lines, festoons and garlands all around : the lamps had gone out : but a more heavenly, and more serene, and a more argentine illumination rendered all objects completely visible.

Daltaban Pasha, seated upon an ottoman in an arbour formed

narrative : and when it was finished, his lordship failed not to make his comments and proffer his encomiums. Lucas Vassilo and Gulnare, sitting together on one side—Julian and Thyra on the other, had also drunk in with interest the harmonious language in which the young lurk's tale was conveyed. The Lady Ismilda sate next to the Pasha ; and though the whole time she affected to have her eyes bent down with a suitable modesty, yet frequent were the furtive looks which she flung upon the handsome Khalil, who indeed never seemed more handsome to her view than on the present occasion. She retained her veil partially over countenance : but the three young ladies had thrown back their veils as soon as all the company had retired.

Ismilda, we said, sate on one side of the Pasha,—Zuleika on the other ; while Khalil, was placed by himself, as it were in the front of a little semi-circle. Rest assured, reader, that he longed to be by Zuleika's side—while the lovely damsel herself longed to be by the side of her lover : but prudential motives induced them to keep themselves thus apparently estranged in Ismilda's presence. But the Kadiasker's daughter had listened with the deepest interest to Khalil's story ; and in the most eloquent pathetic parts the tears had trickled down her beauteous cheeks.

There was something exceedingly saddening in the tragic end of Prince Djem and Philippina Helena ; and this influence was especially felt by the young couples, who from a sense of their own deep love could all the better appreciate the enduring and faithful affection of the un-

fortunate Ottoman Prince and the Castellan's daughter. Thus, after Khalil had finished, Daltaban Pasha was the only one who spoke for some little while, and when his comments were made and his praises bestowed, there was a complete silence for several minutes. At length the silence was broken by Daltaban Pasha,—who said, "I wonder what particular poison it was that Pope Alexander Borgia made use of to accomplish the death of the unfortunate Djem?"

"I have read much," observed Lucas Vassilo, "relative to the infamous Borgias. It is generally supposed that the subtle poison they made use of was called *acqua tophana*—so denominated after an abominable woman named *Tophana* who invented it."

"And of what was this *acqua tophana* composed, think you?" inquired the Pasha, who had a marvellous degree of curiosity in respect to those subjects which at any time happened to interest him.

"On that head can I also enlighten your Excellency," responded Lucas, "The poison was composed of crystallized arsenic dissolved in the smallest possible quantity of water. The fluid thus formed, was colourless and well nigh tasteless: in fact, when mixed with wine, it imparted not any of its flavour, whatsoever little it possessed, to the juice of the grape. The Borgias made use of this poison wholesale: they were indeed a nest of poisoners. Every enemy was mercilessly removed from their path. Lucrezia Borgia, the most beautiful woman of the age—and likewise one of the most profligate—never scrupled to use that poison in order to rid herself of a foe or a rival."

"If all this be true," said the Pasha, "it is a family of monsters of whom you are speaking. But I

suppose—nay, more, I sincerely hope, that the deadly poison to which you allude became extinct with the detestable family that used it?"

"Not so," responded Lucas, "Unfortunately, the poison is so easily made that there can be no doubt other wretches as well as the Borgias have profited by the knowledge of it. Indeed, my reading has led me to believe——"

But here Lucas Vassilo suddenly stopped short: for happening to catch Khalil's eye, it struck him that the young Turk was looking at him in a significant manner, as if deprecating the turn which he had given to the discourse by satisfying the Pasha's curiosity. Seeing however that his looks had thus caused Lucas Vassilo to interrupt himself with an abruptness that might appear strange, Khalil at once bent down his regards; and therefore he thought that he must have been labouring under a mistake, and that there was really nothing expressive of any peculiar meaning in Khalil's looks.

"What were you about to say?" inquired Daltaban Pasha. "Your reading, which is evidently extensive, had led you to believe——"

"That the use of the Borgias' poison," continued Lucas Vassilo, "is very far from being unknown at the Court of St. Petersburg."

"By the Prophet," ejaculated Daltaban Pasha, "if all be true which history and rumour report, many a member of the Russian Imperial family has been taken off by poison."

"There can be no doubt of it," rejoined Lucas Vassilo. "It seems to be almost an inseparable condition of the exercise of imperial power in Russia, that the Sovereign's death shall be an unnatural one. Far as Russian history can retrospect, its traditions declare that nine out of every ten mon-

arch perish by violence; and in most cases poison has been the instrument of destruction. That poison is the *aqua tophana* of which I have been speaking. It leaves the victim with a calm and serene countenance: the appearance of death is placid: there is no outward indication of the foul play that has been adopted. And then too," continued Lucas Vassilo, "the use of this poison, according to all I have read, affords opportunities for a satanic refinement of policy and prudence. If administered in small doses—a drop, for instance, at a time—it causes the victim to perish slowly and gradually, as if sinking under a natural disease. But where a larger dose is administered, it kills at once—as in the case of the unfortunate Prince Djem and the Lady Philippina Helena."

Here, Lucas Vassilo again caught Khalil's eye; and this time he was convinced that the young Turk deprecated the channel into which the conversation had been turned. Without for a single moment comprehending Khalil's reasons, Lucas nevertheless resolved to desist from any farther illustrations of the horrible topic—though, to do him full justice, it may be observed that he had merely spoken in such a strain for the gratification of the Pasha's curiosity, and in the same way that he would have thrown upon any other subject such light as his well-stored intellect enabled him to impart.

Zuleika had failed not to observe that Khalil disliked the tenour of the discourse and she now suggested in an undertone to the Pasha, that it was growing very late. Daltaban would gladly have lingered in the luxurious ease in which he found himself, and would have listened all night to Khalil's stories if the young Turk

could be induced to recite than one on the same occas. — yielding to the hint which his niece had given him, he rose from the ottoman and led the way towards the villa.

The Pasha walked in front, with Ismilda on his right hand and Zuleika on his left: the two Greeks, with Gulnare and Thyrsa, followed lingeringly behind, in order that they might snatch the opportunity to exchange a few whispered words of love and tenderness: Khalil brought up the rear. The instant that the Pasha with his wife and niece had entered the villa, Khalil caught Lucas suddenly by the arm—and said to him in a hurried whisper, "contrive by some means or another to change rooms with Julian Meleda! Fail not, I entreat you!"

Khalil instantaneously drew back; and clutching Julian's arm in a similar manner, he said in the same hurriedly whispering tone, "Lucas will change rooms with you to-night! You must manage it by some means or another! It cannot be difficult, for the Pasha's brain is dizzy with wine."

Khalil immediately quitted the younger Greek, and retreated a few paces in order to afford him an opportunity of saying a few parting words to Thyrsa—as Lucas was doing to Gulnare. The two young ladies then sped on to rejoin Zuleika, and at the same instant the Greeks and Khalil found themselves in the presence of the Pasha, who was waiting as usual to conduct them to their respective rooms. He led the way into what we have already termed the public compartment of the villa, in contradistinction to the harem or private division of the building: and as Khalil had said, the intellects of his lordship were none of the clearest after the

champagne he had imbibed. First of all Khalil, bowing his "good night," entered his own room, the door of which the Pasha locked. Then Lucas Vassilo at once entered the next room as if it were his own; and Daltaban, thinking it was all right, secured that door likewise. Into the adjoining chamber—which really Lucas Vassilo's—Julian Meleda passed; his door was locked—and the Pasha retired with somewhat unsteady gait.

Immediately that Khalil caught the sounds of Daltaban's retreating footsteps, he opened the private door and passed at once into the adjoining chamber—which was that now tenanted by Lucas Vassilo. The Greek was for the first instant smitten with surprise on seeing the young Turk thus emerge, as it were, from the wall itself: but the next moment he felt convinced that Khalil's present proceeding bore immediate references to the hastily whispered injunction he had given in respect to the change of apartments.

"Listen, my dear friend!" said Khalil: "interrupt me not—nor marvel at the part which I am about to assign to you. You know not how much depends upon it!"

"Proceed," said Lucas. "I have already seen enough of you, my dear Khalil, to promise unhesitatingly that blindfold am I prepared to follow your instructions."

"Well and wisely spoken!" rejoined Khalil; "and you will soon have reason to be satisfied with your generous compliance. You must take temporary possession of my chamber. It is most probable that the old woman Amina will presently penetrate thither with the idea of finding me there. Assure her that by a caprice of the Pasha I myself was assigned to some other room, you

know not which. Then lose no time in proclaiming the most violent passion for the Lady Ismilda——"

"What?" ejaculated Lucas; and prove faithless to Gulnare?"

"No," rejoined Khalil quickly: "the falsehood will be venial in comparison with the end which is to be achieved. In your heart you can remain faithful as ever to your beautiful Gulnare. Win Amina over by bribes, if verbal persuasion will not succeed—Have you gold?"

"Ample," responded Lucas.

"Good!" continued Khalil. "In short, contrive so that Amina shall conduct you to Ismilda's chamber. I leave to your ingenuity the invention of some stratagem or pretext in order to avoid the necessity of proving completely faithless to Gulnare; and I can foresee how the adventure will terminate. Hesitate not to leave Ismilda's apartment by any mode of egress she may indicate; and if you encounter a hideous black slave, keep upon your guard—beware of treachery—and on no account advance in front of him. Understand me well!—make that Ethiopian precede *you*—and fear not for the result."

"I have promised to obey you blindfold," said Lucas; "and I will not fly from my word. But tell me, Khalil—why did you look displeased when ere now in the garden the conversation turned on a topic which, I must confess, was not the most agreeable?"

"Simply because it *was* disagreeable," answered Khalil, "And now hasten into my chamber. Ah! one word more! On no account part from your weapons!"

Lucas Vassilo at once proceeded into the room which Khalil had so recently quitted; and the young Turk closed the secret door behind him. Almost immediate-



ly afterwards Lucas heard a key turning in the lock: the door opened gently, and Amina stole in. But great was the woman's astonishment when instead of finding Khalil, as she expected, she perceived the elder of the two Greeks, on whose countenance the light of the silver lamp was shining.

"Pardon me, signor," she said, quickly recovering her self-possession: "but there is some mistake—this intrusion must seem unwarrantable——"

"No mistake!" interrupted Lucas; "or at least a mistake of which I mean to avail myself."

"Allah preserve us!" ejaculated the old woman with an air of much surprise: what do these words signify?"

"They shall be quickly explained," answered Lucas Vassilo. "When first of all you brought me to this villa, it was to introduce me to your mistress, the beautiful and charming Ismilda. But those unfortunate slippers on the mat—you remember, Amina?"

"How can I ever forget them, signor?" interjected the old woman, with a sly look. "The mortal terror they occasioned me——"

"And for which you have not been adequately recompensed," cried Lucas readily at the same time slipping three or four gold pieces into Amina's hand. "This is merely an earnest," he continued, "of what my liberality will be if you fulfil the hopes which I entertain. The Lady Ismilda is beautiful—she partially unveiled herself this evening in the garden——"

"But you love the Lady Gulnare?" interrupted Amina.

"Yes—love her as one whom I am wooing for a bride," rejoined Lucas. "But such love as this does not compel one to be a perfect anchorite——"

"Ah! men will be men all the

world over!" said Amina, with a significant chuckle and a look of corresponding slyness. "But how can I introduce you to the Lady Ismilda?"

"You have the power, if you possess the inclination," responded Lucas. "Conduct me to her presence, the passion with which she has inspired me, and which is altogether apart from the love that I feel for Gulnare, will render me eloquent in pleading my own cause, and in subduing any anger which she may experience towards yourself."

Amina reflected for a few moments. It was tolerably evident that though she had received the bribe, she did not altogether relish the task that was being assigned to her; and Lucas said with an air of impatience, "Quick, quick, Amina!—my mind is bent on this love-affair—and time is passing!"

But the Pasha?" suggested the old woman, in order to throw a difficulty in the way.

"Without seeking impertinently to penetrate into your motives for visiting this chamber at such an hour, and in so stealthy a manner," said Lucas. "I may nevertheless be permitted to infer that his Excellency the Pasha is not now with her ladyship."

"By the Prophet!" responded Amina "there is no reckoning for a certainty upon the phantasies of the Pasha. If you were an Osmanli, you would know that he who possesses a harem exercises the privilege of visiting it at all hours——"

"I am content to run any risk of this kind," interrupted Lucas.

"A man with a faint heart is unworthy the smiles of a fair lady. Besides, I never yet knew one of your sex who was not full of ingenuity in extricating herself from her gallant from a dilemma. Therefore I pray you, good

Amina, lead me hence without farther parley."

"Well," muttered the old woman to herself; "there may be no harm in it after all! A, well one as another for the moment! But yet all these complications trouble and bewilder me!"

"What is that you are saying to yourself?" inquired Lucas, with an air of impatience.

"Only that you are one of the most generous as you are certainly the handsomest of young men," was Amina's ready answer. "You are irresistible! Therefore follow."

"Amina led the way from the chamber, locking the door and taking the pass-key with her. All was silent in the house: and with noiseless tread did the old woman and Lucas reach the vicinage of Ismilda's suite of apartments. The slippers were not upon the mat: and Amina gently opened the door. When Lucas had followed her into the ante-chamber, she said in a gentle whisper, "I must leave all explanations to yourself. Proceed—and use your eloquence with the Lady Ismilda according as you have promised."

The Greek passed into the adjoining room, which he traversed; and in the chamber beyond he found the Lady Ismilda reclining upon the voluptuous cushion. The instant she recognised him, an ejaculation of astonishment burst from her lips, and an expression of mingled vexation and alarm swept over her countenance. Having expected Khalil, it was no wonder that she should be vexed at the appearance of another: and it may also be conceived that an idea of that same complication of circumstances to which Amina in her self-mutterings had alluded, also flashed to the mind of the Pasha's wife. But when at a second glance she surveyed the handsome countenance of Lucas

Vassilo, as well as the fine athletic symmetry of his form—and when she caught the look of assumed tenderness and passion which he bent upon her—she began to feel that her phantasy might be pleased with such a substitute for him on whom her mind was previously set.

"Beautiful lady," said Lucas, approaching the Pasha's wife, on whom he failed not to perceive the favourable impression that he had made,—“to an accident am I indebted for the unspeakable happiness which I now enjoy!”

"Know you not, signor," asked Ismilda, with a certain assumed air of coldness, "that it is no light thing for you thus to penetrate into the sanctity of my dwelling-place? But to what accident do you refer?"—and Ismilda could not help thinking that Lucas Vassilo possessed a splendid pair of eyes.

"Your ladyship will pardon me," he responded, "if I venture to observe that his Excellency the Pasha has partaken somewhat freely of the juice of the grape —"

"Which the Prophet has forbidden!" added Ismilda, who now could not help remarking that Lucas Vassilo displayed a particularly fine set of teeth in contrast with his jetty moustache. "But we are all weak creatures," she observed, with a languid sensuous sigh.

"We are!—heaven knows that your ladyship speaks rightly" rejoined Lucas, laying his hand upon his heart: "or else should I have escaped this passion which has seized upon me!"

"But the accident, Signor Vassilo?" observed Ismilda inquiringly.

"His Excellency the Pasha," continued the Greek, "being slightly under the influence of wine, mistook the chamber

usually appropriated to myself and my companions respectively; and although I must confess Signor Khalil remonstrated somewhat strongly with his Excellency against being assigned to a strange apartment,—yet as the event has happened, I have every reason to bless the obstinacy which the Pasha displayed in locating us according to his phantasy.”

“Ah! Signor Khalil remonstrated?” said Ismilda, assuming a tone of carelessness, though she experienced a thrill of ecstatic delight as she thought within herself, “He loves me!—the beautiful Khalil loves me devotedly!”

“Yes, my lady,” said Lucas: Signor Khalil argued the point with the Pasha,—assuring his lordship that he was wrong in respect to the rooms, until Julian and I interferred—for we were afraid lest his Excellency should be irritated.”

“And what happened then?” inquired Ismilda, who notwithstanding her inward satisfaction at the thought of Khalil’s love, could scarcely keep her eyes off the handsome countenance of Lucas.

“I had not been long in the chamber allotted to me according to the Pasha’s caprice,” resumed Lucas, “when the door opened and Amina entered. Ah, lady! forgive me if at that instant a thought struck me. Amina doubtless came to that room, little suspecting any one was there: because not for an instant can I suppose that she had any ulterior purpose. But I resolved to avail myself of the occurrence. I thought that I loved Gulnare until to night, when I beheld your beauteous countenance in the garden! From that moment my heart became your slave. I knew that some little while back, when

first introduced to this villa, it was for the purpose of being presented to your ladyship——”

“And when Amina made her appearance,” said Ismilda, “you pleaded your cause and you persuaded her to conduct you hither. Is it so?”

“It is so, my lady,” answered Lucas; “and however you may deal with me, I beseech your forbearance towards that poor old woman, whom I believe. I desperately terrified by my threats.

Ismilda made no immediate response: she reflected while she continued furtively to survey the handsome person of Lucas Vassilo. She had all a weak woman’s pride, and vanity, and conceit; and it was a source of gratification to think that this handsome young Greek should have been so suddenly smitten with her charms as to have no longer any thought for the beautiful Gulnare.

“And is it all true that you tell me?” inquired Ismilda at length breaking silence: do you really love me?”

“To see you, lady, is to love you,” replied Lucas, flinging upon her a look which to all appearance was replete with tenderness. “Ah! if you had kept that invidious veil ever over your countenance, my heart would still be my own—or rather I should continue to cradle myself in the delusion that it was possessed by Gulnare. Happy is the Pasha who rejoices in such a treasure as you!”

Ismilda made a sign for Lucas to seat himself by her side on the voluptuous cushions where she was half-reclining: but he placed himself at a little distance, and looked with half downcast eyes as if perfectly dazzled by her beauty. This was a homage not unfrequently paid by amorous gallants to oriental ladies; and it

was always a flattering one. Ismilda could not help thinking that the manners of Lucas Vassilo were exceedingly polished and refined; and that he testified his passion in a way that was stamped with sincerity. She extended her fair white hand towards him: he took it, and affected to press it to his lips with rapture: then suddenly dropping it, he shrank still farther away from the Pasha's wife, as if overpowered by a beauty that intoxicated the senses. All this continued to be exceedingly agreeable to Ismilda, who fancied that when the dalliance of such tender intercourse was over, she had only to give a soft look of encouragement to make him fly to her arms. Yet on his own part—though he was playing this game in the sense of what he considered Khalil's instructions to be—he had not the remotest idea of what the young Turk's objects could possibly signify.

"Has Khalil ever spoken to you of me?" inquired Ismilda.

"Yes, lady: he has remarked on the elegance of your form, when he first saw you with your veil on; and if he possess a heart," continued Lucas, "he must adore you after the glimpse he doubtless caught of your face this evening!"

"Khalil has betrayed naught of what has passed between us," said Ismilda to herself: and then she inquired aloud, "And tell me, Signor Vassilo—You may consider me vain—but our sex, you know"—and she smiled sweetly—"is famous for its vanity—Tell me, I say, has your young friend Julian Meleda also spoken of me?"

"In the same terms as Signor Khalil," answered Lucas. "But will you not give me the assurance, charming and beautiful Ismilda, that of the three I alone

have found favour in your sight?"

"Can you doubt it?" said the lady softly, and bending down her blushing looks. "Was it not you whom I hoped to see here the first evening you were introduced to the villa?—did not Amina tell me how prepossessing were your looks—how fascinating your manners? And when first I saw you in the apartments opposite, was I not struck by the truth of the description which Amina had given? How, then, can I do otherwise than love you? And if such were *not* my feeling, think you that I should have failed to resent your appearance in my apartment at this hour? Oh, believe me, Lucas, your friends Khalil and Julian are nothing to me: but you—you are now everything that I hold dear!"

Lucas went upon his knees—again took the hand which was extended to him—and having pressed it to his lips, shrank back to a still greater distance than before,—murmuring, "I am as much overpowered by the kindness of your words, beautiful Ismilda, as by the brilliancy of your charms!"

The Pasha's wife gazed long and fervidly upon the handsome countenance of Lucas Vassilo; she longed to strain him suddenly in her arms: but she thought that there was a retiring bashfulness on his part which had to be reassured, and a timidity which needed encouragement.

"And what would you think of me, Lucas," she inquired, in the softest flow of her melodious voice and with the most melting looks of her beautiful blue eyes—what would you think of me if I were to abandon myself to a love which may seem only a caprice?"

"How a caprice with *you*, lady," ejaculated Lucas with the well-assumed vehemence of passion "if it be a reality with *me*?"

"Ah! but men are apt to judge so severely the actions of us poor women," returned Ismilda, playing coquettishly with the golden fringes of her caftan sleeve, and thus drawing Vassilo's attention to the well-rounded and snowy arm.

"I am not one of those who judge your sex so harshly," rejoined Lucas not merely wondering at the readiness with which he found answers to her observations, but also at the part which he had undertaken to play in obedience to Khalil's instructions.

"A thousand thanks for that assurance!" said Ismilda: "you have eased my mind of a burden. You will not think the worse of me, dear Lucas, if by my weakness as the wife of another I testify the strength of my love towards yourself?"

"Think the worse of you? No, dearest Ismilda!" said Lucas, continuing to affect a fond tenderness of look and manner. "But tell me—do we incur no danger—"

"Ah! on that point we cannot be certain," responded Ismilda quickly. "You know that an oriental wife is ever the slave of her husband's phantasy;—and therefore at any instant may the Pasha come. But fear not! Should such an accident occur, I can ensure your safety. There is a secret passage leading hence to a spot where my husband keeps his treasures buried; and there at once is an avenue of egress. But let us talk and think as if there were no one else in the world except our own two selves.

Thus speaking, Ismilda made a motion for the young Greek to approach nearer to her: but just at that very instant hasty steps were heard approaching through the adjoining room; and Amina came rushing in with a terrified

countenance. Lucas and Ismilda both started up; and the latter said in a hurried voice, "It is well that I prepared you for the means of escape which you are now to adopt! Hasten—hasten, I conjure you! Another time we shall be happy!"

With these words Ismilda sped to draw aside the velvet curtain: she opened the secret door; and Lucas, bearing in mind all that Khalil had said to him, hesitated not to cross the threshold. The door closed behind him—the curtain was drawn over it—and Ismilda turned with a composed countenance to meet the Pasha, who almost immediately afterwards entered the chamber.

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## CHAPTER XXI

### THE KEY.

The iron lamp was burning in the passage where Lucas Vassilo now found himself; and he advanced—but slowly and cautiously, for fear lest any peril should present itself from some previously unsuspected quarter. He had in his mind too the hint which Khalil had given in respect to a colossal black slave; and he was determined not to be taken unawares. But more than ever bewildered was he in his attempt to surmise what earthly object the young Turk could have in causing him to be dragged through such a singular ordeal as this.

As Lucas advanced he reached the door of the black's cell: that door stood ajar; and on peeping in, the young Greek perceived the monster lying fast asleep upon his couch. He was breathing heavily, as if under the influence of a substantial supper; and such was evidently the case—for the empty bottles and the remnants

of provisions, were upon the table in the cell. The Ethiopian had done ample justice to the viands and the wine which a few hours back he had purloined from the arbour in the garden.

Lucas retreated noiselessly from the vicinage of the door: he considered it by no means necessary to awaken the Ethiopian: but on glancing down the steps, he beheld another person approaching. The next instant showed him that this was Khalil. The young Turk was speedily by his side; and Lucas in a hurried whisper intimated that the black was sleeping.

"Then our work will be all the more easy to perform," was Khalil's quick response. "Come with me."

They entered the cell together. Khalil drew his sword, and holding it over the head of the Ethiopian, he shook him roughly by the shoulder. The black opened his large eyes; but an expression of terror swept over his countenance as the beams of the lamp through the open door were reflected on the bright blade that thus seemed to menace him. And then, too, that expression deepened into a perfect consternation as he recognised the features of Khalil.

"Wretched slave!" said the young Turk, "you know that you are in my power—and the instant has at length come when you are to confess everything. Circumstances have hitherto baffled me—"

"Who are you?" inquired the Ethiopian, with an awe-felt terror visibly depicted on his countenance. "You are but a boy—and yet the very first moment have you exercised over me a power which I cannot understand—"

"I am the personification of vengeance," interrupted Khalil sternly: "but yet I have the power

as well as the inclination to be merciful."

"Speak, signor," said the cowering, trembling black: "what would you with me?"

"Rise," said Khalil: "precede us—leave your scimitar behind you—and do my bidding without hesitation and without remonstrance."

The Ethiopian rose from his couch—furtively surveying Khalil the while with as much mingled awe and terror as if he felt himself to be in the presence of one who from some preternatural source derived the authority which he assumed to wield;—and then the black cast a look at the Greek, as if marvelling why he also should be present.

"Proceed," said the young Turk: and he pointed down the stone steps.

The Ethiopian descended them; and as he drew near to the wooden trap-door which was set in the flagstones of the pavement, he looked tremblingly round as much as to imply that he full well understood Khalil's meaning and purpose. The reader will recollect, from a recently mentioned incident, that there was a door leading from this particular spot into the garden: and Khalil, who had now leisure to examine it, observed that it was painted in such a manner as to correspond with the solid wall of masonry—so that it was no wonder he should on previous occasions have overlooked it. But now that he was aware of its existence, it was comparatively easy to trace its outlines, as well as to remark that the place where the key fitted was made to resemble a hole or indentation in the wall of which the door itself seemed to form a part.

"Give me the key of this door," said Khalil, thus peremptorily addressing himself to the Ethiopian.

"Here it is, signor," responded the black, producing the key. "But what if the Pasha should demand it of me?"

"You will tell him it is lost," answered Khalil. "But it is probable that I myself shall within the hour, that is passing have to give such explanations to the Pasha——"

Even if you consent to spare my life, signor," interrupted the black entreatingly, "it is as much as my head is worth to surrender up this key. His Excellency would assuredly wreak his vengeance upon me——"

"But I can save you if I will!" interrupted the young Turk, with a dignified look: and at the same time he took the key from the hand of the trembling slave. "Should anything transpire," continued Khalil, "to prevent the immediate consummation of my plans, the possession of this key is a guarantee of your complete submission to my commands.

"I have already obeyed you, signor, in everything," returned the Ethiopian. "I breathed not a syllable relative to what has previously taken place between us—although you have used me harshly——"

"Enough!" interrupted Khalil: "you will continue under all circumstances to keep silent until the moment comes when I command you to speak out. Open this trap-door!"

It was with a look and tone more peremptorily dignified and more sternly authoritative than any which Khalil had yet used, that he issued his present mandate,—at the same time that he pointed down towards the trap-door. The Ethiopian appeared well-nigh overwhelmed with terror and consternation: his limbs trembled under him; and he gazed with a species of stolid vacancy upon the young Turk.

"Open that trap-door!" repeated Khalil, with the demeanour of one who was resolved, to be obeyed, and who knew that he could enforce obedience. "If I speak the command a third time without effect, I will mercilessly cut you down with my sabre!"

The Ethiopian appeared to feel the conviction that the young Turk would not hesitate to put this threat into execution; and he said, "I obey, signor: but I shall be still more completely dependent upon your protection against the rage of my master."

"And that protection," answered Khalil, "the power of which you acknowledge, you shall not invoke in vain when the instant comes that you may need it."

The Ethiopian seemed encouraged by the assurance thus given him: and he pointed significantly towards what appeared to be the head of a large iron nail in that part of the wall which faced the door leading into the garden. He then pressed hard upon this knob; and when he removed his hand, the knob itself had sunk to the depth of an inch from the surface of the solid masonry. The black then stooped down, and pressing upon one end of the square wooden trap-door, he caused it to tilt up at the other end.\* At this very instant the ears of all three—namely, the Ethiopian, Khalil and Lucas—caught the sound of the opening of the door leading from Ismilda's apartment.

"The Pasha!" said the black, in a low hurried voice of terror.

"I tell you, my dear Ismilda," Daltaban's voice was heard to exclaim, "that the dream was an ominous one, and that I have misgivings on account of my treasure. I will assure myself——"

"Fear nothing," whispered Khalil quickly to the Ethiopian.

Secure everything as it was at first—and be silent! Remember that your life is in my hands! Secrecy and fidelity—and fear not!”

“And the key?” said the Ethiopian, still in a voice of terror.

“Tell the Pasha it is lost. If harm should menace you, rest assured that I will become your protector. And now quick, Lucas!”

Khalil and the Greek glided noiselessly along; and in a few moments they turned the angle at the bottom of the ascent of steps leading up towards the secret panel-doors of the apartments above: while the Ethiopian lost not an instant in securing the trap-door again firmly in its setting. Meanwhile Daltaban Pasha had not completely opened the door leading from Ismilda’s apartments; or else, as a matter of course, he would, have at once seen what was taking place at the bottom of the flight of stone steps.

“Wherefore trouble yourself, my lord,” inquired Ismilda, who was hanging entreatingly to his arm, “relative to an idle dream? Rest, assured that your treasure is safe. Have you not a faithful custodian of that treasure in Kara Mesrour? Come then, I beseech you—come with me, and repose your head upon my bosom, and you shall slumber serenely.”

“No, no!” ejaculated the Pasha who in the nap which he had previously taken had not slept off the fumes of the champagne imbibed at the festival. “Dreams are signs and warnings unto us. Remain here if you will—or follow me, but firmly resolved am I to assure myself that Kara Mesrour is the faithful custodian you represent him.”

Having thus spoken, Daltaban Pasha threw completely open the door which he had hitherto held

ajar; and began to descend the stairs. Ismilda was close behind him,—her looks being flung penetratingly and searchingly over his shoulder to the bottom of the steps. Kara Mesrour—for such appeared to be the slave’s name—hastened forward to meet his master and mistress: and when at a suitable degree of proximity he sank upon his knees to make the wonted obeisance

“Rise, Kara Mesrour,” said Daltaban Pasha, “You are vigilant—and I am pleased with you, where is that scimitar which should never quit your hand when you are thus upon the watch? Serpents and dragons have in olden times been used as the guardians of buried treasures: but what were either without its venomous sting? What then, are you without your own weapon?”

“Pardon, mighty Pasha!” said the Ethiopian, again prostrating himself at Daltaban’s feet: “my scimitar is here in the cell where I sleep; and it was an oversight

—”

“An oversight?” echoed the Pasha flying into a rage. “It is an oversight which may have occurred many and many a time for aught that I know to the contrary!”

“It is the first time, my lord,” answered Kara Mesrour, “and I beseech your forgiveness.”

“His excellency is merciful—and he will forgive you,” said Ismilda, addressing these words to the Ethiopian, and at the same time practising a little winning cajolery towards her husband.

“Let us see that his scimitar was ready at hand,” exclaimed the Pasha and he forthwith marched straight into the cell. “By the Prophet! what do I behold here?” he vociferated. “Bottles and provisions? Vile slave! the truth is apparent enough. You must have stolen



forth from the place which is so specially confided to your keeping—you must have penetrated into the garden, where you self-appropriated these luxuries which were not intended for a slave such as you !”

Kara Mesrour flung an appealing glance upon Ismilda ; and for the third time he sank prostrate at the Pasha’s feet.

“Wretch !” exclaimed the infuriated Daltaban, “your guilt is but too evident ! You know the penalty—and you shall suffer it !”

“Perhaps Kara Mesrour is not so criminal as you think him, my dearest lord,” said Ismilda, again adopting all her most winning airs in the hope of soothing her husband’s ruffled temper. “Let him explain. Probably it will transpire that Amina, who is charged to bring him his daily supply of food, added of her own accord these little luxuries——”

“And if Amina, did so,” ejaculated the Pasha, “she likewise shall be punished ! It is not the first time I have suspected you, villainous black, of partaking of something stronger than water.”

“In good sooth, my dear husband,” observed Ismilda, softly and deprecatingly, “I myself have occasionally given the faithful Kara a goblet of wine——”

“Then have *you* likewise done wrong !” said the Pasha. “But though the deed betrayed the generosity of your sex, and was in itself a weakness,—yet the main guilt lies with him who accepted it. Nevertheless, at your intercession, Ismilda continued the Pasha, softening, “I will spare his life : but to-morrow will I send him to the slave-maket to be there disposed of : and let him henceforth deplore the day on which he lost the confidence of a good master. Rise, vile slave—and surrender up the key, of which it is but too evident that

you made use in order to steal forth into the garden and purloin the luxuries that were intended for others.”

But Kara Mesrour, instead of rising up, bent down his head until his brow touched the cold pavement at the threshold of the cell ; and he spoke not a word.

“The key !” ejaculated the Pasha “give me the key !”—but still the slave returned no answer.

“Do you hear ?” said Ismilda, “Give his lordship the key—and trust to his mercy—trust also to my intercession !”

“The key, your Excellency ?” groaned the Ethiopian in a low voice. “I have it not !”

“What words are these ?” vociferated Daltaban, now stamping his foot with rage ; “what words are these, I ask ? Is the fellow laughing at my beard ?—is he throwing dirt upon me ? Speak, wretch ! What mean you ?—where is the key of that door leading into the garden ?”

“It is lost,” replied the Ethiopian in a scarcely audible voice.

“Lost ! the key lost !” exclaimed the Pasha scarcely able to subdue the fury of his temper. “See Ismilda ! what a wretch is this for whom you were just now pleading !—to what a traitor have we trusted ourselves !”

Ismilda was evidently seized with consternation : she endeavoured to speak—but could not.

“But where was the key lost” demanded the Pasha. “Is the door itself locked ? Speak !”

“It is, my lord,” replied the still prostrate slave.

“Then the key must be somewhere within these walls ! In your carelessness you have mislaid it, or in your drunkenness you have dropped it !” exclaimed the Pasha.

“I have searched everywhere for it, my lord.” responded the

Ethiopian. "To speak truly I was in the act of looking for it when your Excellency and her ladyship ere now made your appearance."

"It is a mystery which I cannot understand" said the Pasha. "but the carelessness of the deed is unmistakable. Or it may even mean treachery of some sort? Rise, and enter your cell."

Thus speaking, the Pasha drew his sword: but Ismilda, with a terrific scream, besought him not to wreak his vengeance in her presence.

"No—such is not my purpose," answered Daltaban: and at the same time he took up the naked scimitar that was lying by the side of the Ethiopian's pallet. "Kara Mesrour," he continued, "your hours are numbered—aye, even your very minutes!—for I go to fetch those who will inflict the chastisement which you have deserved."

"Mighty lord," said Ismilda, throwing herself at her husband's feet, "listen to the words of your loving and dutiful wife! It is but too evident that the Ethiopian's brain is clouded with the fumes of wine. Grant him a few hours that he may regain his senses—when perhaps he will be enabled to afford a suitable explanation in respect to this missing key."

"Be it so!" ejaculated the Pasha "you speak well, my Ismilda. You hear, vile slave?—you have yet a few hours before you. But if on my return you give not the fullest explanations—and those of the most satisfactory kind—be assured that the bow-string shall do its work, and your vile carcass shall afford food for the fishes of the Bosphorus. Come, Ismilda!"

The Pasha stalked forth from the cell carrying his own sword in one hand and the slave's huge scimitar in the other. Ismilda darted a quick glance of intel-

ligence at Kara Mesrour, as much as to assure him that she would watch over his safety or else rescue him from the fearful peril in which he was placed: and the next instant the huge door closed upon the black. Daltaban drew the massive bolt which belonged to the door; and he said to Ismilda, "Now before I can think of sleep again, I must satisfy myself that the treasure is safe and that this vile slave has been playing us no traitorous game."

We must here observe that Khalil and Lucas had remained at the foot of the ascent of stone steps leading up to the panel-doors of the apartments above; but the angle of the masonry completely concealed them from the view of the Pasha, Ismilda and the Ethiopian. They had nevertheless heard everything that had taken place; and Lucas Vassilo was lost in wonderment at the extraordinary part which Khalil had all along been playing from the first moment that he had whispered the words relative to the change of apartments. The young Turk did not, however, breathe a single word of explanation. There he stood, motionless,—listening to every syllable which was uttered by the speakers farther on, and appearing to be perfectly satisfied that his companion Lucas would remain equally motionless by his side, so that naught might betray their presence in that spot.

When Daltaban had said that he would see if his treasure was safe Khalil peeped round the corner to watch the Pasha's movements. His Excellency and Ismilda advanced as far as the wooden trap-door in the pavement-floor, and first of all Daltaban assured himself that the door leading into the garden was fast locked, as the Ethiopian slave had represented

it. Satisfied on this head, the Pasha touched the iron knob in the wall, and which evidently communicated with a secret spring that had connexion with the trap-door. His lordship next raised the trap; and bending down, looked into whatsoever place it revealed. Then all of a sudden a strange though fleeting spectacle presented itself to the eyes of Khalil.

Ismilda stood close behind her husband; and as he thus bent down her whole aspect underwent a sudden change. Standing almost exactly under the light of the iron lamp, its rays fell upon her countenance; and this countenance became distorted with frightful passions. All in an instant she looked as if she were transformed into a fiend,—as if she were a woman wearing a beautiful mask which she had thus in a moment thrown off in order to display the features of the demoness which it had hitherto concealed. She lifted her arms—she made a movement as if about to give her husband a thrust forward and hurl him into some abyss. Khalil was on the very point of rushing from his hiding place—when Daltaban Pasha abruptly exclaimed, "Allah be thanked, the treasure is safe!"—and at the very same instant he resumed his erect posture.

Ismilda as suddenly became herself again: that is to say, the beautiful mask was resumed—the aspect of the demoness was veiled once more. All this did Khalil see: and he shuddered from head to foot: but Lucas beheld not the scene which we have just described—for he was standing farther back towards the ascent of steps and was not peeping round the corner.

Daltaban Pasha replaced the trap-door in its setting; and then he said to Ismilda, "Come, angel

of my soul—loveliest rose that blooms in the garden of my heart!—let us return to your chamber, where, as you just now promised, you shall woo a gentle slumber to my eyes."

Heavens! if the worthy Pasha could have only entertained the slightest suspicion of how the angel of his soul had been upon the very point of hurling him down through the opening, if he could only have known how the rose of his heart had just been testifying the most cordial hatred and abhorrence towards him,—he would doubtless have despatched her in a caïque to the middle of the Bosphorus so that she might be sunk in the very deepest part of the Strait. But he was entirely ignorant on the point; and he fondly flattered himself that his Ismilda was all that he so much rejoiced to represent her. Khalil watched the uxorious Pasha and his beautiful wife until the door at the head of the ascent of steps closed behind them and then he said to Lucas Vassilo, "Tell me, my dear friend, in a few hasty words, how you fared with Ismilda?"

The Greek explained all that took place between himself and Amina first of all and subsequently between himself and Ismilda—the young Turk listening with attention.

"And now, my dear Khalil," said Lucas, "will you give me some insight into your motives for sending me to the Lady Ismilda, and for the course which you just now pursued towards that horrible black?"

"Not at present, my dear Lucas," answered Khalil hastily; "you must restrain your impatience; Rest assured that I am acting for the best of purposes—and you will soon know everything."

"But, my dear Khalil," urged

Lucas, in a tone of remonstrance, "these mysteries——"

"Must remain mysteries until the suitable moment comes for clearing them up!"—and Khalil spoke in accents of firm decision, yet at the same time with no degree of unkindness.

"Pardon me if I seemed to be inspired with an undue curiosity," Lucas hastened to observe, "I vowed to do your bidding blindfold—and I will not now rebel against one who in all respects displays so superior an intellect. I will, therefore, patiently await your own good time for the unravelment of these mysteries."

"And you will all the better please me," rejoined Khalil, "if you will abstain from mentioning to our friend Meleda what has just passed. There must be for the present no useless discussion of topics which neither of you can understand. Think not, my dear friend, that I am playing the dictator towards you—"

"And yet you have a right to dictate to us," answered Lucas,—"you to whom we are indebted for all our hopes of happiness with the objects of our love! Yes, my dear friend—command me in all things, and I obey. I have not forgotten that to the talismanic power of your ring I owe my life!"

Khalil wrung the hand of the generous-hearted and grateful Greek—saying to him, "Return now to your chamber, Lucas: and I will follow to close the door behind you."

"Which chamber?" asked the Greek dubiously. "Yours?"

"No—Julian Meleda's. Get you to rest: you must stand in need of repose—and you have but three or four short hours for slumber."

Lucas Vassilo ascended to the chamber thus specified; and Khalil closed the secret door upon him. The young Turk did not, however, immediately re-enter his

own apartment. He hastened down the stone steps again: he sped along the passage, until he reached the door leading out into the garden. The door he opened by means of the key which he had received from the Ethiopian slave; and he peeped cautiously forth. It was now broad daylight: but no one was to be seen in the garden. Khalil ascended the slope; and when he gained the level ground, he took from beneath his garments that small square packet which he had received on the previous evening from his domestic Sadak. Hastily tearing off the paper which enveloped the little box—for such was the packet—Khalil opened the lid: and the box contained half-a-dozen small dark-looking balls of the size of nutmegs. One of these balls Khalil took forth; and he flung it forward with all the impulse that his vigorous arm could impart. The ball went whizzing through the air as if it were a bullet propelled from a musket: it cleared the trees which bounded the extremity of the garden—it fell on the edge of an adjacent grove—and there it exploded with a sharp crack, but not loud enough to alarm the inmates of the dwelling. A slight wreath of vapour curled upward, and in a few moments melted into thin air.

Khalil kept his eyes riveted to the direction towards which he had thrown the explosive ball; in a few moments three men were seen gliding amidst the shrubs and evergreens to the spot where the young Turk stood. Sadak was the foremost: the other two were black slaves, dressed in a plain dark costume. They all three bowed with the deepest respect to Khalil: he placed his finger on his lip to enjoin silence—and made a hasty sign for Sadak and the slaves to follow him.

He led them into the secret pas

sage of Daltaban Pasha's villa: he conducted them up the steps to the cell where the Ethiopian was confined. Drawing back the bolt Khalil opened the huge door and entered the cell.

"I told you that I would be your protector in the hour of your need," said the young Turk, thus addressing the Ethiopian. "You can give no satisfactory explanation in respect to the key; and not all the Lady Ismilda's wiles, cajoleries, or artifices would succeed in averting the effects of the Pasha's rage, if you tarried here to meet it. Go with these domestics of mine: they will convey you to an ayum of safety.

The Ethiopian for an instant looked incredulous, suspicious, and even terrified: but Khalil said to him with a haughty dignity, "I deal not in treacheries. If I sought your life, what is to prevent me from taking it now and here? You are one unarmed man against four who are well armed. Go with them: you are their prisoner—I conceal it not: but I pledge my word that your life is safe, if when the time comes you will fulfil all that I shall demand of you."

The Ethiopian now no longer hesitated to accompany Sadak and the slaves: for he doubtless thought that he could not possibly be worse off in their keeping than he would be if he remained to face Daltaban Pasha's vengeance. Khalil bolted the door of the cell again, and followed the party down the door leading into the garden. He whispered a few hasty words in the ear of Sadak, and then turning abruptly round, closed the door behind that faithful servitor and the slaves who had the Ethiopian Kara Mesrour in their custody. Locking that door and taking the key with him, Khalil retraced his way

to his own chamber—where he at once retired to rest.

About an hour after the incident we have just described, the Lady Ismilda stole forth from the apartment by means of the door covered by the velvet curtain. She had left the Pasha soundly sleeping on the voluptuous cushions in her own chamber: and she knew his slumber was so deep that he was by no means likely to awake during her absence. Rapidly did she trip down the steps: she reached the massive door of the cell—she drew back the huge bolt—she opened that door, and said in a hurried whisper, "come, faithful Mesrour—come! You knew that I would not abandon one who has served me with so much fidelity!"

But no answer was given; and no movement was made inside the cell.

"He sleeps!" thought Ismilda to herself: and she entered.

But what language can depict her surprise, when she found that the cell was unoccupied? The Ethiopian was gone! But how? She had assuredly found the bolt shut fast into its socket: she had just drawn it back:—how was it possible that Mesrour could have escaped? Amina could scarcely have been the instrument; for she was ignorant of what had so recently occurred. Besides, she would have had to pass through the rooms occupied by some of the male guests: for as a matter of course, Ismilda was aware that the ascent of steps at the farther extremity, communicated with the secret panel-doors of those chambers. Ah! but the key? The thought suddenly struck Ismilda that Amina might have possession of that key—that she might have penetrated by the garden door, and by that same door have afforded the Ethiopian egress. Yet even

if this were the case, how was it possible that Amina had known of the peril which hung over Kara Mesrour's head?

Horrible thoughts now seized upon Ismilda. All the tales she had ever heard of evil genii carrying off the guilty of this world in order to bear them away to places of punishment, trooped upon her memory. Her shuddering looks were swept around: he dreaded lest she should behold some fearful shape appear before her. There was sickness at her heart; there was dizziness in her brain: and she leant against the wall for support.

But her self-possession came back; and again did her thoughts settle on Amina as the authoress of this escape of the Ethiopian. She closed and bolted the door of the cell, so that she might leave it just as she found it: for she said to herself, "If Amina has really done this, she doubtless has some project in her head in order that Mesrour's disappearance may be accounted for to the Pasha.

Ismilda retraced her way to her chamber, where she lay down by the Pasha's side. She could not sleep—so tumultuous were the ideas, the surmises, and the terrors that were conflicting in her brain. The hours passed; and at length the Pasha awoke. He intimated that so soon as he had performed his ablutions, he should proceed to the cell to question Kara Mesrour, and to inflict condign punishment if the slave's answers were not satisfactory. He then left Ismilda and repaired to his own suite of apartments.

The instant the Pasha's wife was thus disembarassed of the presence of her husband, she hastened to summon Amina: and her first quickly put question was, "Did you effect Mesrour's escape?"

Amina looked astounded and

stupefied by the query—as well indeed she might, for she was in truth utterly ignorant of all that had been taking place.

"Then it is not so!" ejaculated Ismilda; "and it must have been—yes, it must have been an evil genii—one of those servitors of Eblis—"

"Just Allah! what means your ladyship?" inquired the old woman: and she really thought that Ismilda's brain was turned by some sudden calamity.

The Pasha's wife hastened to explain to her confidante all that had taken place; and Amina listened in breathless astonishment, mingled with terror. She was perhaps even more prone to a superstitious belief in genii and evil spirits than her mistress; and she had heard tales of men in desperate circumstances forming compacts with the Evil One at the awful price of their souls. She therefore felt assured that Kara Mesrour, goaded to despair by the dread of death by means of the threatening bowstring, had made some compact of this kind—or else had been veritably carried off by an evil genii.

"It is well known, my dear lady," she whispered with shuddering awe, "that the great Prophet Solomon sealed up a vast number of evil spirits in large copper vessels, and plunged them into the depths of the sea—there to remain for different periods of time according to the extent of their wickedness. It is likewise notorious that the terms have passed for the emancipation of many of these evil genii; and that when their day thus comes, the sea casts up the copper vessels upon the rocks of lonely coasts or the shores of untenanted islands, and there the seals being broken, the spirits issue forth from their metal prisons in the form of columns of smoke. Now

this being the case, it may possibly be one of these disenchanted and liberated genii who has carried off Kara Mesrour—for a purpose I shudder to think of!"

Ismilda had not listened to a syllable of this long tirade: she was plunged in a profound and painful reverie. Though with a tincture of superstition in her mind, yet she was too much a woman of the world to settle her thoughts calmly and deliberately to the conclusion that Kara Mesrour's disappearance must be accounted for by preternatural agency. It was perfectly true that she did not know how to explain it otherwise: but still the longer she reflected on the incident, the more was she inclined to the belief that the mystery might have a perfectly natural solution. Yet what this solution could be, the Pasha's wife was, as we have just said, utterly unable to conjecture.

But Ismilda had not much leisure for reflection—still less to listen to the renewed tirades of Amina, who went on calling up to memory and making a most voluble verbal reference to all the tales of enchanters, magicians, genii, ghouls and ghosts that she had ever in her life heard spoken off.

"Cease this prattle," interrupted Ismilda impatiently; "assist me with my dress—for the Pasha will return in a few minutes, and then the explosion must take place. Above all things keep your countenance—look as calm and collected as possible——"

"But tell me, do tell me, dearest lady," said Amina, "what you think of these hints which I have thrown out as the only means of accounting for the fearful mystery?"

The Pasha's wife bent a significant look upon the old woman; and she said, "I think Amina, it

will be all the better for us, if Kara Mesrour be really carried off by some magician or enchanter—or by some evil genie—or even by Eblis himself rather than that he should have fallen into the hands of living men who may extort from him——But hush! the Pasha approaches!"

And so it was. Daltaban, followed by a couple of his black slaves, entered Ismilda's apartment in a few moments.

"Now, my beloved wife," said his Excellency, "you will be kind enough to accompany us: for inasmuch as you were during the night a witness——"

"Yes, my lord," interrupted Ismilda, with that look of tenderness which she seldom or never failed to bestow upon her uxorious, duped, deluded husband: "I was indeed a witness of Kara Mesrour's derelictions; and if for a moment I interceded for him, it was only in the hope that when he had slept off the fumes of wine he would be enabled to give satisfactory explanations in respect to the lost key. But believe me, my dear husband—should he fail in giving such explanations, not another syllable of intercession shall fall from my lips: but whatsoever punishment your Excellency may in your wisdom and justice ordain to be inflicted, will in my estimation be most righteously merited."

It was evident that this speech, pleased and gratified the Pasha, inasmuch as it by implication conveyed a compliment to his character for sound sense and justice.

"Come then, my beloved Ismilda," he said; "and you too, Amina—accompany your mistress; for you are discreet, and it is well that you should behold how your master deals with those who eat his bread. If this Kara Mesrour explain himself satisfac-

torily, I vow that he shall have my forgiveness: but if on the other hand he be unable to satisfy me in respect to the lost key, his neck shall become acquainted with the bowstring!"

Thus speaking, Pasha glanced round to one of the attendant black slaves: for the individual on whom his looks were thus turned, carried the ominous silken cord in his hand. His lordship then led the way towards the velvet curtain,—which Amina officiously drew back, with an air as if it were a matter of comparative indifference to her that she was thus called upon to be present in these proceedings. As for Ismilda,—being a complete mistress of the art of dissimulation, no one could have judged by her countenance how great was the anxiety which she inwardly experienced.

The secret door was opened: the Pasha led the way,—followed by Ismilda, Amina and the two black slaves.

"I have not forgotten the pledge I just proclaimed," said Daltaban, as he stalked along with all a Pasha's becoming dignity: "I know how to be merciful, and how to be just. Allah be thanked! no one ever had cause to reproach me with an act of tyranny, nor with a deed of improper leniency. I steer the middle course—and therefore do men speak well of me!"

"There is no doubt, my dear husband," said Ismilda, "the world holds you up a model of justice, of integrity, and of wisdom."

The Pasha smiled upon his beautiful wife, and halting in front of the door of the dormitory, he bade one of the slaves draw back the bolt. This was at once done: the door opened inward—but as the slave did not

cross the threshold he observed not that the cell was empty,

"Come forth, Kara Mesrour!" exclaimed the Pasha; "and explain yourself unto your lord and master."

"Yes—delay not!" said Ismilda; "for remember that on this occasion you may vainly flung a supplicating look upon me!"

"Ungrateful slave that he is!" said Amina in a lower key, but still loud enough to be overheard by the Pasha: "why does he not come forth and fling himself at our revered master's feet?"

"By the Prophet!" ejaculated Daltaban; "the dog of a slave is obstinate! But he shall not laugh at my beard—he shall not throw dirt at me! I am powerful to punish—and if he linger another moment he shall feel the weight of my vengeance. Come forth Mesrour!"

"But, as the reader is aware, there was no Mesrour in the cell to obey the Pasha's wrathful mandate; and his Excellency might as well have asked the door to walk away from its hinges as to command that empty cell to surrender up an inmate."

"By Allah, this transcends all human patience!" vociferated the Pasha. "Rush in, slaves—and drag forth the Ethiopian!"

The two blacks sprang into the cell in obedience to their master's mandate; and when he perceived that they looked around in stupid amazement, he drew his sword and darted forward. But it was now his lordship's turn to exhibit a stolid amazement: and certainly no surprise was ever more ludicrous. The sabre dropped from the Pasha's hand—he stood transfixed, with his great mouth wide open, and his large eyes staring on vacancy. Ismilda and Amina also rushed into the cell, and instantaneously began pealing forth



ejaculations expressive of the utmost amazement.

"It is an enchanter who has done this!" cried Ismilda.

"An evil genie!" shrieked forth Amina.

"No—a traitor!" thundered the Pasha: and picking up his sword, he issued forth from the cell.

"What mean you, my dear lord?" asked Ismilda, hastening after him and clinging to his arm. "Whom do you suspect?—who could have done this?"

The questions recalled Daltaban to himself; he stopped short—reflected profoundly for some minutes—and then said, with a ludicrously bewildered look, "By the Prophet! I know not who could have done it!"

He spoke not another word—but descended the steps, and satisfied himself that the door opening into the garden was locked securely as he had last seen it. He then bade Amina and the two black slaves withdraw immediately but enjoining them the strictest silence as to what had occurred. Ismilda watched his countenance narrowly: but there was nothing in its expression which seemed to portend anything ominous or suspicious, in respect to herself. Indeed, if there were any lingering apprehension of such a nature in her mind, it was quickly dispelled, when the Pasha said, "My dearest wife, this is in truth a mystery that troubles me much. But let us assure ourselves that the treasure is safe."

The trap-door was speedily raised; and Daltaban stooped down to look into whatsoever recess, it revealed. If at that instant Ismilda had any inclination to hurl her husband forward, and thus get rid of him at once, she did not dare carry it out: for the two black slaves who

had so recently quitted the place, knew that she had remained behind with the Pasha: and his disappearance would therefore fix all suspicion upon herself. In explanation of this statement we must observe that those two slaves were not in her confidence—and thus were not wedded to her interests.

"Yes—the treasure is all safe!" said the Pasha, as he rose up and restored the trap-door to its setting. "There is but one way," he continued, rather reflecting audibly than actually addressing himself to his wife, "in which I can account for the disappearance of Mesrour. Those young men—or at least two of them—inhabit the chambers with which the secret doors communicate—"

"But it is impossible that they could have discovered the existence of those doors!" exclaimed Ismilda, inwardly suffering the torture of agonised apprehension lest inquiry and investigation should by any means lead to the exposure of all her own iniquitous proceedings. "Besides, what object could either of them possibly have in liberating Mesrour?"

"True," said the Pasha: "they are all good young men—brave—high-minded—"

"No doubt of it!" ejaculated Ismilda. "I beseech your lordship to banish from your memory all that has occurred: let it not trouble you."

But on the contrary, seek in some recreation to drown the memory of whatsoever is mysteriously disagreeable."

Daltaban Pasha however appeared irresolute how to act: for the whole affairs perplexed him sadly. Ismilda redoubled her arguments,—accompanying them by those wiles, cajoleries, and blandishments which she knew so well how to adopt, and the effect of which she had so often tried

successfully with the Pasha. She suggested several means of recreation, all of which would include the two Greeks and Khalil; for she was anxious to find the earliest possible opportunity to have some private discourse with the young Turk. At length she mentioned a boating-excursion: and the Pasha gave his consent—though somewhat reluctantly; for he would much rather have remained to investigate the mystery which so deeply perplexed him: but he really knew not how to proceed another step in the matter.

On quitting the secret compartment of the villa, the Pasha appointed him whom he believed to be the most trustworthy of his slaves, to the post of guardian of the treasure; and we may as well observe that the individual thus selected did not happen to be one of those who were in Ismilda's confidence.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE EXCURSION ON THE BOSPHORUS

THE arrangements for the water-excursion were speedily made. The Pasha hastened to liberate the two Greeks and Khalil from their chambers: and so perplexed was he with the inscrutable mystery which enveloped the disappearance of Mesrour, that it did not strike him that Lucas Vassilo and Julian Meleda had exchanged apartments.

When his Excellency had conducted the three young men to what may be termed their day-room, he intimated that the members of his family were about to enjoy an excursion upon the Bosphorus; and he invited his guests to be of the party.

"But inasmuch," continued Daltaban, "as I have all along endeavoured to avoid affording food for the tongue of scandal in respect to your sojourn within the walls of my villa, it will be as well if you were to enter my caique at some little distance. There are, as you may perceive from the window, several pleasure-boats upon the Bosphorus; and if the occupants thereof were to behold you already seated in my barge when it issues forth from the shady creek they would at once opine that you were residing here. This is to be avoided, until such time as I receive that intelligence which may enable me in all confidence to recognise you openly as the suitors for the hands of my daughters and my niece. Steal you therefore away from the villa—pass through the grounds at the back of the premises—thence proceed along the shore of the Bosphorus—and at a suitable distance the boat shall put in to receive you. By this arrangement it will appear to others who are on the water, as if I merely recognised acquaintances and was taking them on board."

The two Greeks and Khalil promised to comply with the Pasha's instructions; and when they had partaken of the morning repast, they issued from the villa. Having glided through that portion of the garden which was immediately in the rear of the building, they entered a field which intervened betwixt the grounds and that little grove on the edge of which Khalil's explosive ball had served as a signal for the summoning of Sadak.

The moment this field was entered Khalil said to the two Greeks, "My friends, you must permit me to leave you for a few minutes. Ask me no questions. You are aware my actions are at

times characterized by much mystery: but you also have my assurance—and indeed you have seen proofs, that my proceedings all for good objects. Proceed slowly—and I will overtake you ere the spot be reached at which the Pasha's boat is to receive us."

Lucas and Julian were by this time too much accustomed to pay obedience to Khalil's wishes to think of offering any objection to what he now said; and they accordingly continued their way, leaving him to follow at will. He lingered upon the spot where they had parted, until the adjacent trees hid them from his view; and then he sped straight towards the grove to which we have just alluded.

The moment Khalil reached the outskirts of the grove, there was an agitation and a quick gliding amongst the trees; and in a few moments Sadak stood before his master. But the young Turk immediately perceived that something had happened for when Sadak had made a low obeisance and lifted up his countenance again Khalil saw that his looks wore an expression of mingled sorrow and affliction.

"What evil tidings have you for me?" inquired Khalil quickly. "My father—my brothers—my beloved sisters——"

"They are all well, my lord," responded Sadak. "But——"

"Hasten, I command you, and tell me what has occurred! Has my conduct been so tyrannical towards you," continued Khalil, "that you should tremble to make an announcement which may possibly be disagreeable?"

"Kindest of lords and best of masters!" exclaimed Sadak, falling at Khalil's feet, 'you have ever been merciful: but something has happened which might naturally make me dread your lord-

ship's displeasure. In a word, that Ethiopian——"

"Ah! Kara Mesrour?" ejaculated Khalil impatiently. "Is he not in the Castle of the Seven Towers?"

"Would that he were!" murmured Sadak: "for then would your lordship's command have been duly executed. But Mesrour has escaped!"

"Now, by Allah!" cried the young Turk, his countenance flushing with anger, "if this has arisen through negligence on your part——"

"Spare me, my lord—spare me!" said Sadak imploringly. "Allah is my witness that it was through no neglect! Wherefore should I treat with indifference the mandates of my gracious lord?"

"No, Sadak: you have been to me a faithful dependant," said Khalil, conquering his rising wrath. "Quit that kneeling posture—stand up before me again—and tell me how this happened."

"I and the other slaves," responded Sadak, "were conducting the Ethiopian along, firmly bound as we believed.—when all of a sudden, with one gigantic effort he tore himself away from us: and snapping the cords as if they were the flimsiest threads, he seized upon a huge club which happened to lie in the path. Our scimitars flew from their sheaths: but alas, my lord! as well might we have thought to do battle against Eblis himself: for that Ethiopian possessed the strength and the power of a thousand evil genii. The slaves who accompanied me, were all stretched senseless at the feet of the fierce Mesrour; and behold, my lord! his tremendous club likewise struck me down."

Thus speaking, Sadak displayed a tremendous bruise on the right temple and he added, in a low faltering voice, "Thus was it, my lord, that Mesrour escaped."

'And the other slaves, exclaimed Khalil,—“where are they?”

“When we came to our senses, my lord—for we were all stunned by the terrific blows which the Ethiopian dealt us—we sped to Constantinople to inform the police-officers that they were to use every exertion to seek out and capture such a person whom we described: and most faithful was the picture which we thus drew of the Ethiopian. Then, my lord, I returned hither with the attendants, that we might be in readiness for any fresh instructions which you, most excellent master, might have to issue.”

“It is with difficulty,” observed Khalil, “that I can bring my mind to acquit you all of cowardice, even if I hold you guiltless on the score of negligence. What! four of you, armed with scimitars, to be thus vanquished by a single foe wielding naught but a club? Surely there is something preposterous in all this? Nevertheless I will be merciful, Sadak. But you know not the extent of the evil which has thus happened: you cannot conjecture how important it was for me to hold Mesrou in captivity. It was my purpose to have seen him either this day—or to-morrow at latest in order that I might have received from his lips such revelations as would have warranted me in taking steps far more serious still. And now there may be fresh delays——”

But Khalil stopped short; for he had been musing audibly, rather than intentionally saying all these things to his dependant.

“What can be done, my lord, to remedy the evil?” asked Sadak, in a very mournful tone.

“The Ethiopian must be found—yes, he must be found!” exclaimed Khalil, emphatically. “You have instructed the police

of the city: but what if Kara Mesrou sought not the city at all? what if sped away into the open country?”

“My lord,” interrupted Sadak, “I bore that contingency in my mind. Judging from the circumstances of the case that you had the strongest reasons for effecting the arrest of this Ethiopian, and therefore for holding him captive, I neglected no means which suggested themselves for prompt and effective pursuit. The police authorities have hours back sent off mounted scouring parties in every direction——”

“This at least is some atonement for your fault, Sadak,” observed Khalil; “and I therefore pardon you. But did you conduct all those proceedings with the strictest secrecy?”

“Yes, my lord—with the strictest secrecy,” answered Sadak. “It was not the Kadiasker’s body of police to which I addressed myself—but to the special corps——”

“Good!” ejaculated Khalil: “in this matter you have acted wisely. It is of the highest consequence that the Ethiopian should be captured. To-night you must bring me intelligence whether the pursuit has been successful.”

“And has your lordship any farther instructions to give unto your slave?” asked Sadak.

“Yes,” responded Khalil: and drawing forth a small slip of paper, he said, “proceed to Constantinople, and procure me at a chemist’s shop the article which is here specified. To-night I will find some means of communicating with you.”

Sadak made a low obeisance as he received the slip of paper; and Khalil then hastened away from the grove. He proceeded at a rapid rate in the same direction which the two Greeks had already pursued; and on glancing towards

the Bosphorus, through an opening amongst the trees which shaded its bank, he observed Daltaban Pasha's caique gliding away from the neighbourhood of the villa. There was an expression of much annoyance on the young Turk's countenance, in consequence of the escape of Mesrour: but when he espied his two Greek friends at a distance, he composed his looks and sped on to rejoin them. Scarcely had he thus overtaken them, when the Pasha's caique swept with a graceful curve towards the spot where the young gentlemen were to be taken on board.

Under a canopy or awning of green satin, richly embroidered and fringed with gold, the Pasha and the ladies reclined upon velvet cushions. Ismilda, Gulnare, Thyrza, and Zuleika were all there, seated beneath that canopy which protected them from the sultry beam of the sun; and they were closely veiled. The caique was beautifully painted, and had much gilding about it: six stalwart slaves plied the oars; and it shot in swiftly to the spot where two Greeks and Khalil were now waiting to be taken on board. On entering the caique, they took their places on a seat specially allotted to them: and thus being all together they had no opportunity of showing particular attentions to the respective objects of their love.

The caique glided onward: there were several other pleasure-vessels likewise skimming the surface of the Bosphorus; and in some there were bands of music—so that the delicious sounds of harmony floated over the Strait. It was in the nature of Daltaban Pasha to take things with true Mussalman philosophy when once the first excitement was passed; and thus he appeared to have altogether forgotten the mysteri-

ous and disagreeable incident in respect to Kara Mesrour. It was Ismilda's object to soothe her husband as much as possible, and prevent his thoughts from dwelling upon that occurrence: she accordingly exerted all her powers of conversation to amuse Daltaban's mind to conjure up a variety of topics for the discourse.

The caique continued to glide onward; and at the expiration of about an hour, the left bank of the Bosphorus presented such a peculiarly charming scenery to the view that the two Greeks and Khalil, who had never before been thus far, expressed their admiration alike by their words and looks. Daltaban Pasha—who was now in perfect good humour—made a sign to the slaves to pull close in to the shore, in order to afford the three young gentlemen a better opportunity of contemplating the scenery which they so much admired. Beautifully laid out gardens, stretching with a gradual slope down to the water's edge, contained well-built villas and were dotted with kiosks and pavilions exhibiting every variety of that fantastic picturesqueness which often displays itself in oriental architecture. The scene was indeed a lovely one; and brilliant sun brought out with strongest relief the emerald green of the foliage—the ruddy or golden hues of the fruitage which gemmed the boughs—the marble fountains throwing up their crystal waters—the bright gravel-walks—the parterres of flowers—the variegated painting of the kiosks—the gleaming white villas, with their green blinds at the windows—and the gilded crescents which tipped the pinnacles as if with concentrated beams of glory caught from the refulgence of the orb of day.

Presently a diverging streamlet was reached—a streamlet which being one of the tributaries of the Bosphorus, meandered amongst delicious gardens, through verdant meadows and shady groves, until its source was embowered amidst the forests of Roumelia. Daltaban Pasha made a sign for the slaves to take the caique up this stream; and as it was but fifty yards wide at its mouth, and gradually grew narrower, the beauties of scenery and of buildings on either side could be observed and admired in all their minutest details. Presently a part was reached where, on the right bank of the stream, there was a dense hedge of myrtles; and above the myrtles orange, pomegranate, and citron trees displayed their varied fruitage in luxuriant abundance. Here the slaves rested upon their oars, in order, that the ladies and gentlemen of the party might enjoy the view of this scenery, as well as the cool refreshing shade of the spot;—and the spectacle of that pendant fruitage reminded the pasha that there was a basket of refreshments in the caique. He ordered the slaves to let the barge float in against the hedge; and a rope made it fast to the trunk of a small tree growing out of the water. The basket was produced: its contents consisted of fruits cooled in ice, exquisite confectionary, bottles of sherbet and wine:—and thus the picnic luncheon commenced.

The ladies and the three young gentlemen gave their preference in favour of the sherbet.—Daltaban Pasha proceeded to quaff a brimming glass of some delicious French wine. Khalil was in the act of raising a goblet of innocuous and refreshing nectar to his lips,—when happening to glance up towards the hedge, he suddenly gave vent to an ejacu-

lation of amazement. Tossing down the goblet, he sprang from the boat—burst through the hedge—and thus disappeared from the view of those whom he left behind, and who were utterly lost in wonderment at this abrupt and unaccountable proceeding.

On bursting through the hedge, Khalil found himself on the outskirts of an inner shrubbery, separated from that hedge by a path-way or avenue of about three yards wide.—The shrubbery seemed to be laid out in a curving form: but Khalil, pausing not to survey this scenery, plunged into the shrubbery with his drawn sabre in his hand. Forcing his way hither and thither amongst the evergreens, he searched in every possible direction—but without the hoped-for result. At length he suddenly emerged upon a scene which we must describe.

The shrubbery formed a complete circle, enclosing a delightful garden about two hundred yards in diameter. The parterres displayed flowers of the richest hues and of the most varied description; crystal waters were playing in marble basins; peacocks with their gaudy tails, expanded, appeared upon the bright gravel-walks: numerous parrots were perched upon the boughs of trees. But these ornaments of the scene shrank into complete insignificance in comparison with the far more brilliant and seductive attractions presented by a bevy of lovely women who were grouped together in the centre of the garden. Some were reclining upon voluptuous ottomans—others were lounging in graceful attitudes in the vicinity of the fountains: all were young, and all were of a marvellous beauty. Far from anticipating the intrusion of one of the opposite sex, these fair creatures had laid aside their veils: and the richness of their

costumes showed that they were not menial slaves, but that they were ladies belonging to the harem of some high and wealthy dignitary.

Such was the scene upon which Khalil suddenly burst; and for a few moments the ladies were so stupefied with astonishment that they did not think of catching up their veils. But even when they somewhat recovered from this stupor of amazement, they did not exhibit any particular haste to cover their countenances;—for they perceived that it was a young man of exceeding prepossessing appearance who had thus intruded upon their retreat; and their hearts beat with an instinctive pleasure at the idea that their beauty should be looked upon by one who was himself so beautifully handsome.

Khalil had stopped short,—for the moment forgetting the purpose which had brought him thither; when all of a sudden he perceived an agitation amongst the trees in another part of the shrubbery, and thither he sped with lightning swiftness,—his drawn sabre in his hand. Cries of mingled amazement and terror now burst from the lips of the young ladies: for they could not possibly conceive wherefore that youth should thus be flitting away from them, with his gleaming weapon ready drawn as if to inflict some terrible chastisement.

Guided by the agitation of the trees in the shrubbery, Khalil darted forward on the track of him whom he was thus pursuing, and who was evidently fleeing away with all his speed. Beyond the exterior of the shrubbery the garden stretched sloping down towards the Bosphorus; and now through that garden might be seen a man rushing onward, and another pursuing,—the former

unarmed, the latter with a sabre in his hand. These individuals were Kara Mesrour and Khalil. For while seated in the boat, the young Turk had suddenly caught a glimpse of the Ethiopian's hideous countenance peering through a slight opening in the myrtle hedge: and hence the ejaculation which fell from his lips—hence also the abruptness with which he had sprung from the caique and dashed through that boundary of verdure.

The distance between the outskirts of the shrubbery and the bank of the Bosphorus was nearly three hundred yards,—for the gardens where this scene took place were extensive, and belonged to a beautiful villa situated upon an eminence. Away darted Kara Mesrour: on sped Khalil in pursuit. The Ethiopian displayed a marvellous swiftness, considering the unwieldy bulk of his form: Khalil glided along as if his feet did not touch the ground. He gained upon Mesrour:—every moment diminished the distance between them. But the black was darting on towards the Bosphorus. Did he mean to plunge into those deep waters, unless, cut down by Khalil's sabre?

"Stop, vile slave! surrender yourself!" exclaimed the young Turk, "or I strike with my scimitar! I will show you no mercy!"

But the Ethiopian responded not: the bank of the Bosphorus was reached—and he plunged in headlong. Khalil stopped short and flung down his sabre,—ready to leap in also, at the spot where the Ethiopian should rise. But moments grew into minutes—the waters had recovered their unruffled surface: they were disturbed no more. Kara Mesrour reappeared not.

"The wretch is drowned!" thought Khalil to himself; "his

head most probably struck against a stone at the bottom?"

Still the young Turk lingered upon the bank, gazing upon the smooth and sunlit surface of the Bosphorus; and though ten minutes elapsed, there was not so much as a gurgle nor a ripple to indicate the movements of a diver beneath, nor of a struggler against death in the profundity of the water.

Picking up his sabre and returning it to its sheath, Khalil slowly moved away from the bank: but now beheld a number of persons trooping rapidly towards him—their drawn scimitars reflecting with flashing gleams the rays of the sun. There were at least twenty of them,—some white, some black,—but all habited as domestics or slaves, except one person who advanced at the head of the party and was evidently their master. This individual was richly dressed; and he was a personage with much natural dignity of demeanour: but he was now in a furious rage, and burning to wreak a terrific vengeance on the youth who had dared to intrude upon the presence of the ladies and on the privacy of the grounds.

Khalil advanced with a calm dignity to meet the party: and he did not draw the sabre which he had returned to its sheath: As the high personage with his slaves drew near, Khalil waved his hand, as much as to deprecate all violence; and he said in a firm tone, "I have erred unintentionally—and I will explain the cause. To whom have I the pleasure of addressing myself?"

The high dignitary stopped short, astonished and overawed by the lofty resoluteness of Khalil's demeanour; and the attendant slaves stopped short likewise—thus following the example of their superior.

"I am Rami Pasha," said the high dignity: "and I await your explanations—although methinks they can little avail you."

"Your lordship bears a name which is honourably known," replied Khalil, as that of a distinguished statesman and a firm adherent of his Majesty the Sultan Selim. Listen, my lord, In yonder streamlet there is a caique in which friends of mine are seated. We stopped to partake of refreshments in the shade of your myrtle hedge. All of a sudden I beheld the countenance of one who has offended against the laws, and whom the hand of justice has been outstretched to grasp. I pursued him: it was thus that unintentionally I was led to intrude on the presence of your ladies. But little thought or leisure had I to feast my eyes with their beauty: I continued my pursuit of him whom I sought; he has plunged into the waters of the Bosphorus, and has perished there."

"The tale is doubtless true," Rami Pasha: "for we beheld you pursuing a black in the garb of a slave——"

"And if your lordship has not within the last few hours received a new menial into your service," interrupted Khalil, "then was he a stealthy intruder upon your grounds."

"He was an intruder," responded Rami Pasha. "But one intruder warrants not a second. Who are you, young man?"

"One word in your ear, my lord," answered Khalil; "and then the necessity of farther questioning will cease."

Rami Pasha was too much struck by the graceful dignity of Khalil's demeanour, as well as by the chivalric self-possession and lofty confidence which he displayed, to refuse to listen to the word which the young Turk



offered to speak; and motioning with his hand for the slaves to remain where they were, Rami Pasha advanced towards Khalil.

The young Turk whispered something in the Pasha's ear, and then instantaneously lifted his finger to his lip with an air of dignified command. Upon the hand which he thus raised, glittered the talismanic ring which, as the reader has seen, had already saved two lives, namely, that of Lucas Vassilo and that of Zuleika's father the Kadiasker. Khalil had received it back again from the beautiful Zuleika; and he now wore it upon his finger. Rami Pasha at first looked astounded on hearing the words, whatsoever they were, which Khalil had whispered in his ear: but he was on the very point of giving enraged vent to an ejaculation of scornful disbelief, when he caught sight of the ring. Then a rapid and remarkable change took place within him; his incredulity vanished;—he was smitten with the truth of whatever Khalil had said unto him.

"Not a word! not a syllable!" said the young Turk hastily, but in a tone of authority. "Retire with your slaves—accept my apologies for my unpremeditated intrusion upon the bevy of beauties within yonder enclosing shrubbery—and be silent on the other point!"

Having thus spoken, Khalil sped away and soon reached the path which lay between the shrubbery and the myrtle hedge. His ear caught some words which Daltaban Pasha was uttering at the moment.

"What could possibly have been the cause of our young friend's precipitate departure?" said the Pasha.

"Here he is, my lord, to answer for himself," responded Khalil, in a gay and good-humoured tone.

The next instant he forced a passage through the myrtle hedge; and stepping from the bank he leapt into the caïque.

"And what explanation will you give us, Signor Khalil?" asked the Pasha. "What made you flit away so abruptly?"

"I beheld a black snake on the other side of the hedge," rejoined Khalil calmly; "and I sped in pursuit of it."

Cries of terror burst upon the lips of Ismilda, Gulnare and Thyrza: but Zuleika doubtless saw something in Khalil's look or accents which made her suspect that his words were not to be taken literally but figuratively.

"A black snake?" exclaimed the Pasha. "I have seen green and yellow ones: but a black snake in this country of ours—never!"

"There are snakes, my lord, of all colours," said Khalil, still with a calm composure, but with a significance which was perceptible to Zuleika, whose faculties, sharpened by love, enabled her to comprehend the young Turk better than all the rest could understand him.

"And did you catch this black snake?" asked Daltaban.

"I pursued the reptile as far as the Bosphorus," rejoined Khalil; "it plunged into the waters, and thus escaped me."

"And what if it had turned upon you, Signor?" said Ismilda, shuddering.

"It was precisely what I should have desired," answered the young Turk: "for in that case my sabre would have cut it in twain."

"Was it a large black snake?" asked Ismilda.

"I do not remember that I have ever seen a large," responded Khalil, "But the subject is not a pleasant one to be touched upon in the presence of ladies; and with your permission we will change it."

"And pray let us get away from this dangerous vicinage!" exclaimed Ismilda entreatingly, as she thus addressed herself to her husband: "for there may be more reptiles ready to dart out upon us!"

The Pasha made a sign to the slaves, and the caique, being set in motion again, continued its way along the stream.

"I know not, Signor Khalil," said the Pasha, after having refreshed himself with another glass of wine, "whether it will be intruding upon good-nature to beseech you to tell us one of those interesting tales in the weaving and narration of which you so much excel? Doubtless the ladies will unite in my intercession; and as to your friends, betwixt whom you are seated—"

"Let me speak for the ladies!" said Ismilda. "We shall be delighted to give Signor Khalil our attention."

"For Julian and myself, I can repeat that assurance," said Lucas Vassilo.

Khalil expressed his readiness to comply with the desire which had been made known to him; and he began the recital of that historical romance which will be found in the ensuing chapter.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### KHALIL'S SIXTH STORY.

IT was the end of the seventeenth century, that there occurred one of the most extraordinary events which ever resulted from the iniquity of diplomatic machinations—an event which has given rise to some of the most remarkable hypotheses ever adduced to elucidate an affair apparently involved in almost impenetrable darkness,

and which have ever since formed no mean subject for the discursive pen of the historian.

On a beautiful evening towards the end of the seventeenth century—as I have before stated—the fond farewells of two faithful lovers were exchanged upon the shore of Scio, one of the islands of Greece. A small boat touched the strand; and at a short distance from the shore was a beautiful vessel corresponding in description to the brig of the present day, and then "lying to," apparently waiting for the return of the boat before noticed. With one hand upon the prow of this boat, and with the other fast locked in that of a lovely girl, a young Greek, of about five-and-twenty, stood upon the beach, strenuously endeavouring to console his companion, who wept bitterly at the necessity of separation. That lovely girl was also of Greek extraction, as the faultless profile, the dark black eyes, the complexion, the figure, and the garb declared. Her age was not above nineteen; but the genial warmth of the climate had caused all the voluptuous beauties of womanhood to develop themselves into the glowing attractions of maturity.

"Wherefore art thou so sad, Irene?" asked the Greek sailor, with a glance of unfeigned affection at his beautiful companion. "Dost thou doubt my love? Thinkest thou that yonder isles, which I am about to visit, will show eyes more tender than thine, or best a countenance which can have more charms for me than that on which I am now gazing?"

"Oh, Manuel!" returned the maiden, "thou knowest that I do not doubt thine attachment towards me: but wouldst thou have me quit the shore with a light heart, when I see thee go forth

upon that wide expanse of waters which is so fraught with peril?"

"My skill defies the tempest, and my knowledge the shoals, the quicksands, and the rocks," answered Manuel, with a glance of pride towards his beautiful vessel which lay at a little distance.

"You may dare the perils of the deep—and the whistling wind and the flashing lightning may awaken no alarms in your gallant breast," replied Irene: but the memory of that dread day, when your vessel was driven upon the rocks which I see from hence—and when, timid and trembling girl as I was, I hastened, with the household of the Patriarch of our nation, to the seashore——"

"And many and many a time have I blessed that hour of danger and of shipwreck, since it first revealed thee, Irene, the sweetest flower of this land, to my view!" interrupted Manuel gaily.

"And it is because your love is so grateful to my soul," answered the maiden, blushing at this compliment, while a partial smile of satisfaction played upon her beautiful lips, "that I tremble at every peril which might suddenly deprive me of that solace—that charm of existence!" The other Greek girls of the island envy my bright destinies, because I am the Patriarch's niece, whom he loves as if she were his own child; and they imagine that I shall one day wed a noble of our nation. But they know not that every little gust of wind, and every ripple of the ocean, makes me tremble for the safety of my brave, my gallant, my own Greek sailor,"

"And when the commerce which I now pursue amongst these islands shall have filled my coffers," responded Manuel, tenderly, "I can present myself to the Patriarch Avedick with enough of that gold which he

loves so well to tempt him to overlook my humble birth, and confer upon me the hand of his beauteous niece."

"And then you will tempt the dangers of the sea no more?" said Irene, her eyes now lighted up with the refulgence imparted to them by the star of hope, which shines so brightly in the horizon seen by lovers. "But," she added, again relapsing into a melancholy softness of tone and manner which deeply affected her lover, "the perils of the wind and wave are not *all* which you have to encounter in your wanderings upon the deep. Have you no fear of that terrible corsair, who descends upon our island by night—pillages the houses, carries off the youth of both sexes to sell them as slaves in the markets of Munis and Tripoli—whose power is so redoubtable that nurses breathe his name in the ears of children as a word of terror!"

"His vessel is not larger, nor better manned, nor more carefully armed, than mine," returned Manuel. "Farewell, Irene: hush these idle fears, dry these beauteous eyes, and stifle the sighs that agitate your bosom. I shall speedily return again; and when thou seest the vessel with the well-known blue lantern cruise of these shores, at the hour of sunset thou wilt not fail to remember that a faithful lover will hasten to the spot whither his well-beloved Irene will, as usual, repair to meet him. Adieu, my dearest girl—adieu!"

"Farewell, Manuel," answered the weeping maiden. "I shall not know peace until I see thee again."

The young Greek captain impressed a kiss upon the brow of the young maiden, and hastily leaped into his boat, which he pushed away from the shore. Irene remained upon the strand,

waving her kerchief, until she saw his bark touch the vessel that waited for him in the distance.

A month passed away, and during that period fresh tidings of the ravages committed in the adjacent islands, by the corsair-ship which was at that period the terror of the Egean sea, reached Scio from time to time. The Greek Patriarch, who had lately made this island the place of his residence, in consequence of the danger to which he was exposed at Constantinople by the intrigues of the Armenian Catholics and the Jesuits—who were powerfully assisted in their machinations by Ferriol, Marquis of Argental, the French Ambassador at the Ottoman Porte,—the Greek Patriarch became uneasy at the depredations and outrages committed by this pirate; and as the Ottoman cruisers, the captains of which were all more or less piratically inclined themselves, failed or neglected to capture the rover, he was at length determined to adopt measures to accomplish this aim. Fortune seemed to favour the wishes of Avedick; for about the period of which mention is now made, a sailor deserted from the pirate's ship and hastened to Scio, to throw himself at the feet of the Patriarch.

"The unlawful traffic in human beings which the captain whom I have so long served pursues," said the deserter, "is hateful to the Greek sailors of his crew. The Mussalmans who serve under him delight in a trade which is not forbidden by the laws of their Prophet Mahommed; but the Christian revolts at such a means of enriching himself."

"My son," answered the Patriarch, in a mild and assuring tone, "heaven will pardon thee thy past misdeeds, if thou wilt but

exert thyself to place thy late master in our power."

"Heaven may pardon me," said the deserter, "but will man?"

"Canst thou point out any means by which we may ensure this depredator of the Archipelago?" demanded Avedick.

"I can," replied the sailor.

"Then by the Most High I swear, that not only shall thy person be safe now and henceforth, and that past offences shall be forgiven thee; but also I pledge myself to count thee down five thousand lion ducats on the day that the corsair is in my power."

"Then be the wishes of your holiness at once gratified," answered the sailor. "Six days hence does the captain of the pirate-vessel intend to make a descent upon the western coast of this island. The rich granaries and numerous flocks of the wealthy farmers of that district are the temptation. The ship will be moored at a short distance from the land; and the captain with a portion of his crew, will put off in the barge to attempt the enterprise. Need I say more?"

"I shall be prepared to receive him," returned Avedick.

The day before the one of which the pirate meditated his descent upon the island Avedick procured a body of troops from the Sandjakbag or Ottoman Governor of Scio, for an especial purpose. These troops were despatched to the post where the incursion was to take place; and were stationed in one of the farm-houses which the pirates intended to attack. The Patriarch communicated the object of this precaution to the Greek farmers of the district, and desired them, as an additional guarantee of safety to drive their flocks to an inland fortress, which stood upon a small lake, and was thence denominated

ed the Castle of the Waters. The farmes profited by this suggestion; and not only lodged their flocks in the Castle of the Waters, but also placed their families and most valuable movable possessions in that fort.

On the same day the beautiful Irene was seated at the window of her apartment in the Patriarch's mansion, anxiously watching a white sail which she had seen in the horizon since daybreak. It, however, remained stationary during the whole day: and it was not until the shades of evening cast their veil over the surface of the ocean, that the suspense of the Greek maiden was relieved. It was then that she saw the well-known beacon light upon the stern of the gallant vessel belonging to her lover; and with a beating heart she hastened towards the shore to welcome his return.

In a couple of hours after the appearance of the blue light upon the ocean, Irene was embraced in the arms of her brave Greek.

Faithful to the signal art thou, Irene, as am I to the adored one of my soul!" exclaimed Manuel.

"The wished-for moment has returned again—the moment of our meeting!" said Irene: "but alas! the instant of our separation will come back also. I dare not ask when you sail again."

"Thou knowest, beloved one," answered Manuel, "that it is incumbent on me to use despatch in prosecuting these commercial enterprises which can alone place me in a condition to demand thy hand; and every day I lose in idleness is a further procrastination of the happy hour that will make you mine."

"And yet it is so sweet to be with those we love!" murmured the maiden, in that dulcet tone which vibrated like the sound of a harp to the inward soul of the Greek sailor.

"I expect that one more cruise amongst the islands of the Archipelago will accomplish all my wishes," said the lover, "A few weeks, Irene shall alone elapse, ere I seek the presence of your hand in marriage. And I will come, attended by slaves bearing such costly gifts, and with so gorgeous a display of wealth, that he shall not refuse my suit. Oh, that will be a happy day, Irene! Would to God it were arrived!"

"You speak with more of bitterness than anxiety," said Irene, alarmed at the strange emphasis which marked her lover's language. "Nay, press not my hand so hard! I fear that some presentiment of evil agitates your mind; and did not the shades of night obscure the moon, haply I might see my alarms confirmed by your countenance."

"No, Irene, no—you are mistaken," answered her lover, in a hurried tone. "My sincere, my ardent affection makes me impatient to remove all barriers to our union; and not till then can I be completely happy."

"And will my love ensure your felicity?" demanded the charming Greek maiden. "Shall you not sigh after that ocean which you adore, with all its excitement of change and danger?—or can you consent to dwell in peace and tranquillity with one who will never be wearied of testifying her affection for you?"

"Oh, paint not yet the sweets of domestic life, dear girl: or I shall never dare to tempt the dangers of the ocean more! Once again, Irene, must I say adieu to thee for a season—for a few weeks; and then will I return, never more to leave thee."

"You sail again to night?" cried Irene, in an agitated tone of voice while she clung more closely to her lover, as he walked on the shore.

"To-night I sail again," answered Manuel: "but I leave not the vicinity of the island for a day or two."

"By all the love you bear for me, Manuel—by your hopes of our union—and by the heaven that now hears my supplication," ejaculated the maiden, speaking rapidly and with an alarming earnestness of manner, depart not from these shores; but remain, Oh! remain, within the precincts of this day at least foreight-and-forty hours!"

"Wherefore this strange request?" asked Manuel, in unfeigned astonishment.

"I have happy tidings to communicate to you, Manuel," replied Irene. "The terrible pirate who has so long infested these seas will to-morrow night be in my uncle's power."

"Ah!" exclaimed Manuel.

"Oh! all is well devised—well planned; and he cannot escape us," pursued Irene; and then my beloved Manuel will rove upon the ocean with at least one chance of peril removed from his path."

"But is the stratagem so admirably arranged that the corsair must fall into its snare?" asked the young captain, glancing rapidly around him, and placing his right hand upon a pistol in his girdle.

"Nay, judge for yourself, incredulous one!" exclaimed Irene, with a playfulness of manner which bore testimony to her joy at the probability of the pirate's capture—a joy that was, however, principally experienced on her lover's account. "The scheme is as follows:—A sailor has deserted from the corsair's ship, and given my uncle information of an intended descent to-morrow night upon the western coast, in the vicinity of the rich Greek farmer's dwellings. In sooth, the preda-

tory horde will receive a warm greeting; a hundred Turkish soldiers already occupy the principal farm house; and all the wealth of the Greeks themselves has been transported to the Castle of the Waters."

"Admirably arranged," ejaculated Manuel. "But the deserted sailor—where is he?"

"He is at present detained in my uncle's dwelling. A large reward will be his, if the stratagem succeed."

"And the thanks of all the Greeks will be due to their revered Patriarch," added Manuel. "But the hour waxes late, Irene; and we part once more,"

"Part!" exclaimed Irene. "Oh! that word *part*, which is introduced into every language to prepare us to murmur that of *death* with pangs of unmitigated acuteness!—the monosyllable that is the half-way house between life and the grave! Oh! wherefore should we part, when thus we love so tenderly? Alas! the sincerest love is but an oasis in the desert: around that charming spot in the heart are dreary wastes—anticipation, suspense, and the pangs of absence."

"We must part, indeed,—but to meet again. Console yourself, Irene: I will but cruise the north of this island for a day or two, I will respect your wishes, while the danger of the corsair hovers near; and on the evening of the second day from this we will meet again."

"That hope consoles me," replied the damsel, and the lovers parted once more, with renewed vows and protestations of eternal fidelity.

Turn we now to the farm house on the western coast of the island, where the detachment of soldiers was stationed. The captain of this corps recommended his men to remain in the utmost tran-

quillity within the walls of the spacious tenement, and to allow the horde of pirates to enter the premises ere an attack should be made. A bloodless victory, he said, would be thus obtained; and the culprits might be sent alive to the Ottoman Porte to be treated according to the good pleasure of the Sultan and the Grand Vizier. The obedience of the soldiers to these directions was ensured by the hopes of the plunder of the vessel, it being the intention of the captain of the military corps to seize the barge in which the pirates were to possess itself of the ship.

The morning dawned, and but a few hours were to elapse ere the descent was to be made. A vessel, resembling the corsair, had been already described on the north-western side of the island; and no doubt remained in the minds of the soldiers that the deserted sailor had put them in possession of the proper information. The captain already dreamt of promotion, and saw the chief command of the Janizaries in the perspective; and his soldiers revelled in the idea of plunder and booty. In the meantime, Avedick remained at his own dwelling on the other side of the island, anxiously awaiting the time when he might flatter himself, that through his wise precautions, the seas were rid of one of the most terrible pirates that ever infested them; and Irene was seated in her bower, pondering over the sweet things which had fallen, on the previous evening, from the lips of her lover.

The call to prayer—God is Great!—had just issued, at mid-day, from the lips of the captain of the little band of the soldiers stationed at the farm house, when a wretched object of charity presented itself at the gate of the

tenement. Two or three of the soldiers immediately issued forth to ascertain what had conducted the wayward steps of the mendicant thither; but the unfortunate man fell upon the threshold apparently, in the last stage of exhaustion. He was hastily raised upon the shoulders of the soldiers, and carried into the dwelling.

"*Inshallah!* the *Giaour*\* is dying!" ejaculated one of the soldiers, as he supported the head of the sufferer, who in spite of his tattered garments, seemed to be a young man of good mien.

"Whose dog is he," growled the captain, "that he should drop down upon us the moment the faithful betake themselves to prayer? You say that he is *Giaour*. Then, by the sword of the Prophet, administer a hundred blows of the bastinado upon the soles of his feet, and let us see if that will bring him to life.

"I know that I am less than the dust in your presence," said one of the soldiers, addressing himself to the captain; "but if you slave might raise up his voice, I would offer counsel to his master, I would suggest that this dog of a Christian be questioned as to the manner in which he came in the wretched plight.

"You speak well," replied the captain; "give the infidel a cup of wine—God forgive me!—and then will revive him. Allah! Allah! that my poor stomach should compel me to have recourse to the same patent medicine!"

The captain drew a horn from his girdle, as he uttered the words and took a long draught of the wine it contained; he then passed it to his men, who hastened to pour some of the liquid down the throat of the strang-

\* The Christian. *de la*

The draught appeared to revive him; he opened his eyes, and in a short time was enabled to give an account of himself.

"I am one of the Greek subjects of the Vice-gerent of God upon earth, the great and glorious Sultan, Ahmed III, whom Allah preserve!" began the stranger.

"The Giaour has made his face white before us," murmured the captain, who was pleased with this acknowledgment of the power of his imperial master. "In the name of the Prophet proceed."

"Thanks, mighty captain!" ejaculated the young Greek. "Until this morning, I was the most miserable of men, but your kindness has relieved my mind of anxiety and trouble. My narrative is short. A few days ago, the humble hut in which I dwelt, at the southern extremity of the island, was beset by pirates, who landed from a vessel moored at a short distance, and in an instant my little possessions were swept away. I was turned out into the wide world, a wanderer and an outcast; and the dwelling in which I was born was burnt to the ground. Oh, my maledictions alight upon the heads of the plunderers!" For six days have I wandered about, almost without food, and not knowing where to lay my weary head to rest."

"Abominable!" cried the captain, as soon as this narrative was brought to a conclusion. "Speak truly, Giaour: were these pirates Greek, or Moslems?"

"They were Greeks," was the reply. Alas! that I should be compelled to tell the sad tale of the disgrace of my fellow-countrymen!"

The villain!" ejaculated the captain: grinding his teeth. "But they will shortly be in our power; and I swear to thee, Christian, that thou shalt exercise

the vengeance that thou deemest most fit to fall upon the head of their chief."

"I ask not for vengeance," replied the young stranger; "all I implore is rest for a short period, until I shall be enabled to continue my weary journey towards the north of the island, where I have a relation who will afford me refuge, and grant me protection."

"By my soul, it shall be as you say," cried the captain. "If you stay with us, you will this night see sport that will arouse your young soul to vengeance against those who have despoiled you. Inshallah, Inshallah! the sea-robbers, through whom you have suffered, will be in our power ere to-morrow's sun gilds the minarets of Stamboul."

"God prosper your arms!" murmured the Greek.

The prayers, which had been interrupted by the arrival of the stranger, were now said by the captain and his band; and two or three hours passed away, during which some of the soldiers had recourse to the chibouque, and others to repose. The captain regaled himself with a pipe and a cup of fragrant coffee. At sunset; the call to prayers, *Allah Kerim!*\* again assembled the soldiers around their chief, in the vast hall of the farm house where they were stationed: and as soon as the religious ceremonies were again completed the whole company sate down to partake of the evening meal.

The Greek—in order, as he declared to testify his gratitude to the captain for the kindness he had received at his hands—insisted upon ministering to him in the capacity of a servant; and the officer, who was a weak-minded though a brave man, was pleased with this attention. The Greek

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\* God is Great



served him upon his knees; and when the repast was concluded hastened to another room in the house, to fetch a basin for the Mussulman chief to perform his ablutions. He then insisted upon making the captain's coffee with his own hands, and performed these menial offices with a readiness which completely won the heart of the functionary. As soon as the Greek had presented the favourite beverage, brewed from the choice production of Mocha, upon his bended knee, to the captain, he hastily rose from his humiliating posture and left the hall. The Greek hurried rapidly out of the farm-house, and darted into a path leading away from the sea-shore. In a few minutes he looked behind him, and saw lights moving about the premises he had just left. It was a dark night—as dark as it ever is in that clime of starry heavens; and the cold breeze of the evening fanned his cheek, which was heated with the excitement of the last few hours. When he saw the lights dancing about in the distance, and knew that a search was at that moment being made by the Ottoman soldiers after him, a smile of triumph played upon his lips; and he doubled his speed away from the dangerous vicinity.

Suddenly the sounds of approaching footsteps fell upon his ears; and he immediately stopped and listened attentively. The tread of many feet upon the beaten road was soon distinguished by his experienced ear; and he hastened to meet those who were advancing towards him. In a few minutes he encountered a band of about fifty men, who appeared to be laden with booty.

"What, is the work concluded thus speedily?" demanded the Greek of him who marched at the head of a band of corsairs—for such they were.

"No resistance were offered to us by the panic-struck farmers," answered the individual thus appealed to, and who was the lieutenant in command of the detachment of pirates. "The moments we reached the gate of the Castle of Waters, we found ourselves the masters of the fortress without striking a blow. There was not even a sentinel posted at the entrance, so confident were the inhabitants that their secret was not discovered, and that we should fall into the ambush laid for us at the farm-house. But, you, captain—how has it fared with you?"

"My plan has experienced the success which I anticipated," was the reply. "I introduced myself amongst the Ottoman soldiers; I found that the information I had received was correct relative to their numbers, and I saw that they were well armed. By the aid of a well-invented and well-told tale I immediately excited the sympathy of the whole troop, and was favoured with an account of the captain's plans and hopes. As imagined, the soldiers placed the utmost reliance upon their chief and would be powerless without him."

"You have not then succeeded?" began the lieutenant, hastily interrupting his chief,

"Patience—patience, good Thedoric," returned the captain, "and you shall hear. The Ottoman commander is not dead—but he is powerless. He treated me with comparative kindness, and I would not take his life. I therefore infused a strong narcotic, instead of a virulent poison, in his coffee: and I feel convinced that it has already produced the desired effect, inasmuch as a sensation seemed to pervade the soldiery shortly after my departure. I saw the light of their torches glancing about in many

directions, and care not now to attack them with my handful of gallant Greeks. Is the booty considerable?"

"So vast," answered the lieutenant "that we did not regret to fulfil your injunction, and forbear from making prisoners."

"And if we disperse the soldiery, and succeed in taking the captain on board the vessel with us," rejoined the corsair chief "we shall secure a princely ransom for his release."

The pirate captain then seized a scimitar from the hands of one of the men, and, placing himself at the head of the band, advanced with bold and rapid step towards the farm-house he had ere now left. A solemn silence pervaded the pirate ranks; and the deep silence of the night was only broken by the din of their footsteps, and the "ripples of the neighbouring ocean. It was not until the corsair chief had set his foot upon the threshold of the farm-house door, that the terrified Mussulmans became aware of their danger. They then raised the war cry of *Alla u Akabar!*\* and *Yegdur Alla!*† but the speed with which they rushed to their arms was less the result of confident valour than the mechanical impulse of an infinitive feeling to protect themselves from danger.

The captain of the pirates uttered but one word of encouragement to his men; and the sacks which contained the booty they had acquired at the Castle of the Waters were quickly thrown upon the pavement of the court-yard in front of the farm-house, to allow them to wield their scimitars with additional strength. The conflict was short; sixty of the Mussulmans soon lay gasping upon the floor of the hall in which they were assailed; and

the remainder threw down their arms. The prisoners were then bound hand and foot, by the corsair captain's orders, and left in safety where they were; but the captain of the Mussulman troop was removed from the cushions where his followers had placed him when they saw him fall into a state of lethargy from which all their endeavours could not rouse him. He was lifted upon the shoulders of three or four of the Greek pirates; the others resumed possession of the booty, to which they added the weapons of the soldiers whom they had just defeated; and the band then withdrew to the barge, which awaited their return in a creek at a little distance.

The Greek Patriarch's rage knew no bounds when he heard of the defeat of his scheme, and the successful incursion of the pirates. He could not imagine how they had discovered the secret of the Castle of the Waters having been chosen for the depot of the farmers' valuables, and of the ambush which had been prepared to entrap the invaders. The Greek sailor whom he had detained was not the author of the evil, because he had no means of communicating with his former friends: and the whole arrangements had been conducted on a plan of secrecy and expedition which had allowed no chance of their being betrayed. Irene was equally at a loss to account for this extraordinary failure of the stratagem so cunningly devised by her uncle; and she entertained more serious apprehensions than ever on behalf of her lover, who was thus exposed to the power and subtly of so successful a chief as the corsair captain.

On the evening of the day after the exploit of the pirates, Irene hastened to the place of appointment, agreeably to the directions

\*God the Highest, † There is but one God

of her lover on the occasion of the previous interview. The Greek maiden waited not many minutes upon the strand, ere the splash of oars fell upon her ears—a boat touched the beach—and the gallant Greek whom she expected leapt upon the shore. The moon shed her silvery rays upon the joyous countenances of the lovers as they rushed into each other's arms; and the ocean murmured a reply to the billing murmur of their rapturous kisses. One arm of the Greek youth encircles the slender waist of his beautiful mistress: and one of his hands retained hers in its fond grasp. In this manner they walked up and down that part of the shore which was in the immediate vicinity of the boat; and for some time their conversation was of a nature interesting to themselves alone. Lovers are never wearied of avowing and seeking avowals of their mutual affection; and few heroines of truthful tale or well-planned fiction ever loved so tenderly as those who were thus pacing the wave-worn shore of the Island of Scio. At length Manuel declared that he must again bid farewell to his Irene.

"I know not wherefore," said the maiden, in a very plaintive voice, "but my heart entertains a very strange foreboding that this is the last time we shall meet on earth, or that some dread misfortune awaits us. I cannot account for this impression,—neither can I subdue it. I am like an individual who, while he is convinced that apparitions from the grave are but childish fables, still trembles to cross the cemetery by night."

"Hush these idle fears, beloved one!" said the Greek captain, pressing the hand of the maiden to his bosom. "I promise that this shall be my last voyage, and that in a few weeks—"

"Oh, tempt the sea no more!"

ejaculated Irene; "my uncle is kind—he loves me—and he would not decide harshly in a matter where my happiness was so nearly concerned. Throw yourself at his feet—implore him to accord you my hand—and he will not turn a deaf ear to your prayer."

"Alas! where and how can I seek him, so that the presence of his pomp and insignia of his authority shall not remind him of the difference between the haughty Patriarch and the humble Greek captain of a mercantile vessel?" cried Mannel. "I should be overwhelmed with the aspect of all his ecclesiastical glory, his wealth and his power; and my downcast looks and timid address would remind him of the presumption of which I should be guilty in demanding of him the hand of his niece! No—dearest Irene: let me first secure those treasures which will give me confidence in myself, and act as a passport to his favour; and then I will hasten into his presence, fearlessly and with confidence, and make known our love and plighted vows."

"Oh, wherefore tempt the perils of the sea again," persisted Irene, "whilst thou canst seek an opportunity of presenting thyself to Avedick at a time when he is alone—divested of all the emblems of his power—and apart from that pomp which would confound thee? Dost thou think that his existence is one continued scene of ostentation and grandeur? Oh! no—there are moments in his life when the meanest mendicant is not more humble than he. On the summit of yonder hill—that hill which you see dimly in the distance, through the shades of night—is the tomb of my father, the brother whom Avedick so tenderly loved! Ever Sabbath eve does he retire at the hour of sunset, alone and un-

attended, to that spot, and, casting aside all ideas of earthly grandeur, the Patriarch whom you deem so haughty, kneels down upon the cold sod, to breath a prayer to heaven for the rest of the soul of that beloved relative who is no more! At such an hour—at such a moment as that, you might present yourself to him without dreading his pride, and plead your cause—*our* cause—with success!”

“Irene, I dare not seek to ally myself to you, until, I have secured the wealth, which my ambition covets,” replied Manuel.

“And to obtain that wealth,” continued Irene, bitterly, “you will venture upon that ocean which is ruled by a pirate that defies all the stratagem of the crafty, the strength of the mighty, and the powers of the great? You will tempt that element which this Corsair Captain alone seems to sway with triumphant rule,—and all this to gain an increase of that useless gold, which will not augment our mutual love, nor render you an atom dearer to your faithful Irene?”

“All this will I dare,” replied Manuel, with a smile of triumph; “that our terrestrial happiness may not incur the chance of being embittered by the gall of poverty!”

“Knowest thou not, Manuel,” continued the young maiden, in a tone of the most earnest persuasion, that this pirate chief, whom I so much dread, has triumphed over the designs of mine uncle, as a crafty man frustrates the devices of a child? He discovered all—his troops pillaged the Castle of the Waters; and he, under an impenetrable disguise, succeeded in impregnating with a powerful narcotic the cup of the captain of the troops that lay in ambush. That officer was carried away by his fol-

lowers; and this morning was a letter conveyed, by some unknown means, to my uncle, demanding a ransom of twenty thousand ducats for the Ottoman captive. The Turkish Governor of the island is exceeding wroth with Avedick for the failure of the expedition and the capture of one of his best officers; and my uncle sees no alternative but to comply with the corsair chief’s demand.

“By the honour of our race,” said Manuel, after a moment’s reflection, “your uncle will not consent to pay this ignominious ransom, without exercising his ingenuity once more to ensnare him who so venturously demands it?”

“You have judged Avedick rightly,” replied Irene. “The Corsair Chieftain’s letter has settled the plan by which the ransom is to be conveyed to him; and the Patriarch intends to turn that measure to advantage. With all the Corsair’s craft, he will scarcely escape us now. His letter, couched in a peremptory tone, informs Avedick that he shall cruise to-morrow morning off the northern point of the island, and that a boat, rowed by two men only, may there convey to him the ransom, and receive the Ottoman Captain in exchange. At this moment Avedick is employing shipwrights so mysteriously to change the appearance of a boat, that the wooden horse of our ancestors did not prove more fatal to the Trojans, than shall this vessel be to the pirates’ ship! The boat is furnished with a false deck, beneath which twenty well-armed warriors can lie concealed. It will appear to contain two rowers only; and when it touches the ship’s side, one will ascend the deck of the pirate and tender the ransom. Then, when the Otto-

man Captain shall have been released from bondage, the false deck of the boat will suddenly vomit forth a gallant band, that, in the moment of surprise, will not fail to capture the formidable corsair, well-manned though the latter be.

"A glorious scheme!" ejaculated Manuel, in a joyful tone: "and one that cannot fail of success."

"God send it may turn out aright, and relieve these seas from the intrepid pirate!" cried Irene.

"Once more must I now leave thee, dearest girl," said Manuel, after a long pause. "A few weeks only shall elapse, ere I return to fulfil my promises, and claim thee as mine own."

Irene in vain expostulated with her gallant lover; she saw that he was resolved again to dare the dangers of the Egean wave, and she was compelled to bid him a melancholy farewell. The lovers parted on the spot where they had so often met and parted before: and the Greek damsel thought not of returning into her uncle's halls, until the splash of her lover's oars no longer broke upon the silence of the night.

From the moment Avedick had received the letter to, which his niece alluded, a number of experienced shipwrights had been employed in altering a large boat in such a way as to provide it with a deep recess, covered with a false bottom. In that vacuum twenty men could be safely stowed away. The toils of those artisans were completed at day-break; and, when all the necessary preparations had been made, the boat proceeded to the northern extremity of the island. Anxious to behold the success of his plans, Avedick himself repaired, by land, to a height commanding a view of the ocean where the drama which he had devised, was intended to be en-

acted. At a distance lay the pirate-vessel; and Avedick anxiously watched his boat, as it drew nearer and nearer to that formidable cruiser.

The boat approached the ship's side and at length it touched the floating dwelling of the pirates. One of the men, who manned the boat, threw several bags of money upon the deck of the corsair, where they were received by the sailors: and then as soon as this portion of his task was complete, he leapt up to the vessel's side, to claim the Ottoman Captain. No sooner did his feet touch the deck of the corsair, than a shrill whistle echoed around, and in a moment a massive stone was raised by ropes to the extremity of the mainyard of the ship. Avedick's emissary stood aghast, first casting a glance towards the huge piece of rock which swung in the air, and then turning towards the pirate-sailors who held the end of the ropes by which they had raised it aloft. Suddenly the mass fell with a hideous din upon the devoted boat below; the ship rose and fell upon the waves stirred up by the abrupt commotion; and in another moment the calm sea rippled over the spot where Avedick's warriors lay entombed in the dark abyss below. The man, who remained upon the deck of the pirate-vessel, stood stupefied—uncertain how to act; but in a few minutes, he was recalled to the full exercise of his senses by the rapid preparations that were making for his death. A noose was slipped, by rude hands round his neck; a dreadful scream of horror emanated from his lips;—but that cry was not repeated; for ere he had time to implore for mercy he was swinging in the air: and about the same instant, the Ottoman Captain was hoisted to the other arm of the same yard.

As soon as this terrible deed of vengeance was completed, with all its dread details; the pirate-sailors set up a shout, or rather a yell of triumph, so loud and long that it reached the ears of Avedick, who had been a horrified witness of this dismal tragedy. The corsair then hoisted a blood-red flag to his mast head; a light breeze springing up at the moment, the ship veered about and was soon lost in the distance.

It was impossible to keep secret the particulars of this last adventure with the corsair; and the whole island was plunged into the deepest consternation when it was made known. Widows and orphans cursed the policy of Avedick, whose measures had thus deprived them of the support and comfort of existence.

The Sandjakbeg sent a full account of these events to the Grand Vizier, Tschorli Ali; Avedick himself was overwhelmed with shame and astonishment at the detection of all his plans by the pirate captain; Irene knew not how to account for this extraordinary termination of an artful and well concerted plot; and the Greek portion of the inhabitants of Scio did not hesitate to avow their belief that the formidable pirate had entered into a compact with the Enemy of Mankind, by virtue of which he had secured to himself the dominion of the ocean. No vessel dared venture alone upon the waters of the Egean Sea; and all trade was carried on by little fleets of merchantmen protected by convoys. The commerce of that part of the Mediterranean was nearly ruined; and even the Venetians and the Genoese trembled at the name of this redoubtable Corsair. Nor did this last incident tend to allay the apprehension of the

lovely Irene, with respect to the safety of Manuel.

In consequence of his successes, the Captain of the corsair lost much of the prudence which had originally characterized all his proceedings; and, in a moment of idle boasting, he declared to his men that so little was he a prey to fear, and so confident was he of their valour, that he would even undertake to sail through the fleet of the Kapitan-Pasha, or Lord High Admiral, himself. This perilous and useless exploit was attempted; but it proved the downfall of the gallant pirate. On board the fleet were some sailors whose keen eyes immediately recognised the vessel that had ravaged the coasts of the adjacent islands; signals were made to the various ships of the Ottoman fleet; and the Greek brig was hemmed in by the formidable squadron. The pirates with their usual daring courage attempted the most desperate resistance; but they were boarded on all sides, and the few that did not perish in the engagement were taken prisoners. At the head of the captives was the Captain himself, and the Ottoman Grand Admiral immediately set sail with his prize for Gallipoli, whence he despatched the corsairs to Constantinople.

The prisoners were thrown into the Castle of the Seven Towers; and all the booty found in their ship was laid at the feet of the Sultan. Under the impression that they had more wealth concealed in some of their haunts or caverns on the coast of the Egean islands, the Grand Vizier instead of ordering them to be executed, decreed that they might purchase their lives and freedom for a ransom of a hundred thousand ducats, to be paid within a period of two months from the date of this decision. In case

of failure in accomplishing this aim, the pirates were to be then put to death.

The captain of the corsair deeply regretted the rashness which had plunged him into so serious a dilemma; and nothing but death seemed to await him and his comrades. He had neither a chance nor a hope of obtaining the enormous sum fixed for their ransom; all the treasures which he possessed had been captured with his vessel; and he had no other resources left. He did not dread death himself; but he wept bitterly when he thought of the fate which awaited so many gallant and faithful seamen—a fate prepared by his folly! There were, moreover, other considerations that induced him to cling to existence: but, at the same time, he felt that his courage would not fail him when he should be called upon to walk forth to the gibbet.

Time passed away; and at length the day before the fatal one which had been fixed upon for the payment of the ransom or the execution of the prisoners, arrived. The pirate-captain possessed not a ducat; where was he then, to find a hundred thousand? In the afternoon, a tschaousch, or messenger, from the Grand Vizier, arrived at the Castle of the Seven Towers, to ascertain if the ransom would be paid. Upon receiving a reply in the negative the tschaousch ordered the captives to prepare for death on the following morning.

Scarcely had the tschaousch left the cell in which the Corsair chief was confined, when another individual sought admittance to the same place. The new visitor to the condemned Greek was a man of middle age, and who spoke the prisoner's native language with a strong foreign accent. He was clad in the

costume then in vogue in the western part of Europe, and seemed to be a personage of some rank or consequence by the manner in which he was treated by the gaoler, who conducted him into the presence of the Captain of the pirates.

"Corsair, thou art to die to-morrow!" said the stranger, as he seated himself upon a large block of wood near the prisoner's straw.

"Such announcement is not, doubtless, the only business that brought thee hither?" was the reply.

"To-morrow," continued the visitor, not heeding this remark, you will be dragged forth to the gibbet, amidst execrations of the multitude; and your head will long display a ghastly countenance to the few individuals that will dare approach the lance upon which it will be fixed at the Sultan's gate."

The Corsair made a sign of impatience; for dauntless as was his courage, he cared not to hear a detailed account of the particulars of his anticipated punishment.

"Dread must be the ideas when death hovers so near us," said the stranger; then suddenly turning towards the prisoner, he exclaimed in a hurried tone, "What would thou not do for the man who, in this strait, were to give thee reasonable hope?"

"I would love him as a brother were that hope founded upon truth—and execrate him as a demon, were it based on lies," answered the pirate.

"And if the means of evading a terrible death were pointed out to you," resumed the other, "would not gratitude place you at the service of him to whom you would be indebted for the salvation of your existence, and escape from the dungeon?"

"The man who would procure

my release and that of my brave companions might dispose of the life which he would restore to me," was the reply.

"What reliance could be placed upon the promise of a corsair?" demanded the stranger: "what guarantee do you offer for the fulfilment of your pledge?"

"There are but two kinds of security with which men deal," rejoined the pirate. "The one is that offered by the custody of the body; and the other is the obligation which an honourable sentiment imposes even upon a corsair."

"And the latter is better than the former," murmured the other: then, after a short pause, he added "The means of release and safety are in your power: but a great service is required of you in return for the exertions made to save you. It would be useless to declare that motives of pure philanthropy have now brought me hither: you know that I am but laying out all the interest which it suits me to reap the money demanded for your ransom."

"Name your conditions," said the Corsair. "If I choose to accept them, an affirmative reply shall soon be given. If I reject them, there is no chance that your secrets will be betrayed:"—and as he uttered these words he laughed bitterly.

"You are aware," began the stranger, drawing nearer towards the pirate-chief, and speaking in a low tone, although there was no danger of being overheard,— "you are aware that the Marquis of Argental, the French Ambassador, is waging a desperate war against the influence of the Greek Church in the Ottoman Empire. The patriarch Avedick was raised to his high ecclesiastic seat by means of the influence of the Society of Jesus, to the members of which he pledged himself to

show all possible favour towards the Catholics. How has he kept his word? He has persecuted the Catholics with the most unmitigated cruelty from the moment of his elevation to the patriarchal chair; and Ferriol of Argental has vainly expostulated with the perjured monster. Equally futile are the representations of Ferriol to the Grand Vizier, who defends and protects the Patriarch in all his misdeeds. The French families that have been long residing in the islands and the frontier cities of the Egean Sea, are rapidly quitting habitation where the vengeance of the Greek ecclesiastic overtakes them, and Ferriol must either adopt some urgent measures to repress his arrogance or at once write to his Government and declare his inability to protect the subjects of King Louis from Greek tyranny."

"You are doubtless the confidant of the Marquis of Argental," said the Corsair, who listened to this narrative with the most profound attention.

"I am one of his oldest and most faithful follower," answered the Frenchman—for such he was; "and thus I am charged to carry out the designs of my illustrious master. No alternative remains but to remove Avedick from the seat of that power which he exercises so despotically and with such glaring injustice. Ferriol has demanded his dismissal from the dignity of Patriarch: but the Grand Vizier refuses to listen to such a measure. The French Corsair, a bold and determined race; and the Marquis of Argental has devised a plot which will for ever interfere with the tyranny of Avedick. To snatch him away from the island in which he now resides—to bear him to France, and then imprison him in some strong fortress, whence escape is impossible—thus



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is the scheme devised by Ferriol. It was necessary to find some daring individual to carry the plot into execution: your hatred for Avedick who has already twice laid snares to entrap you within the scope of his tender mercies, is well-known; and your influence on your companions—your intimate acquaintance with the island of Scio—and the courage for which you are so justly renowned, have created a belief in the mind of my honourable master, that no fitter agent than yourself could be selected for the scheme."

"The offer is a tempting one!" said the Corsair, a ray of joy animating his countenance as the Frenchman thus disclosed the nature of the service that would be required of him as the condition of his release.

"You shall once more be placed in command of a gallant bark," continued the Frenchman; "and in addition to the payment of your ransom, a large remuneration shall be accorded to you when your prisoner touches with his feet the shores of Marseilles. It is for you to seek the opportunity to capture your victim: and this will doubtless, prove the most difficult portion of your task, as the Patriarch is far too crafty to wander apart from the guards or the hirelings that attend upon his sacred person."

"This matter will not prove so difficult as you imagine," returned the Corsair. "Every Sabbath evening at sunset does Avedick repair unattended and alone to the summit of the hill on which is the tomb of a well-beloved brother; and there does the proud and haughty ecclesiastic divest himself of the ideas or his grandeur, and humble his head on the marble monument that covers the resting place of his relative. You were right when you supposed

that I could execute your task with caution and with prudence: you see that Avedick's slightest movements are well-known to me."

"You have still some few hours to decide upon my proposal," said the emissary of the French Ambassador. "Shall I return this eve? Remember your time is short!"

"It is so short," answered the Corsair, "that my decision shall not encroach upon it for leisure to reflect. I accede to your offers, and will execute your master's wishes with that punctuality and readiness which will receive a fresh impulse from a sentiment of the deepest gratitude."

"You agree?" exclaimed the Frenchman, delighted at the success of his mission.

"I agree," answered the pirate.

"And you swear to accomplish the wishes of the Marquis of Argental, your liberator?"

"I swear!" solemnly ejaculated the Greek.

"And, when the scheme shall have been executed, you will never divulge it to mortal man?"

"To that I will swear also; by the honour of my father's memory—and *he* was no Corsair!"

"By sunset you shall be free," said the Frenchman; and with these words he took his departure, —leaving the Greek behind him in a strange state of anxiety relative to the performance of this extraordinary promise to pay a hundred thousand ducats for the ransom of himself and his companions.

In the meantime the beautiful Irene was anxiously awaiting the promised return of her lover. Now that she had received the welcome tidings that the terrible pirate, whom she had so much dreaded, had been captured by the fleet of the Grand Admiral, she no longer entertained those constant apprehensions which had

ice embittered her peace, relative to the safety of Manuel; but all the perils of the winds and waves were not so easily triumphed over as the career of a human being by his fellow-men. Week after week glided away, and still, Manuel returned not to the place of appointment. Irene, however, remembered that he had informed her that this—his last cruise—might probably extend to six weeks; and she soothed her fears with the balm of hope during the lapse of that period. But, when she entered upon the seventh week of his absence, nightly and nightly did she turn away with a sick heart from her casement, because her eyes caught not a glimpse of the blue lights upon the ocean, which were the signal of his return. Thus did another month pass away,—and then another; and then another; and nearly half a year had elapsed since Manuel and the lovely Greek maiden parted upon the shores of Scio.

The manners of Irene underwent a considerable change. She grew melancholy and desponding; and, although she had never been remarkable for a very cheerful disposition, her pensive demeanour soon attracted the attention of her uncle. To his questions she, however, remained silent resolved that her heart should sooner break than she would divulge the secret of her affection for Manuel, until he accorded her his permission to make known their love. She did not suspect his fidelity: but she became alarmed lest some accident had befallen him; and fervent were the prayers that she put up to heaven for his safe return.

The winter months had passed away, and spring had returned, with its serenity of atmosphere, its flowers, and its verdure; and

again was Irene enabled to wander at will upon that shore where so many pleasing reminiscences were conjured up to her imagination. One evening, as she was roving on her beloved spot, the splash of oars fell upon her ears: she anxiously glanced toward the ocean—but no signal light was there; and she feared that the boat which was drawing near would not restore to her the long lost Manuel. Hope did not, however, entirely desert her: nearer and more near drew the boat—it touched the strand—and in another moment the lovers were locked in each other's arms.

"O, Manuel, thou hast returned again!" exclaimed Irene, when the first ebullition of joy was passed. "But wherefore hast thou remained away so long? was it to try the affection of her who loves thee so tenderly? or has danger interfered to keep thee from me?"

"Alas! heavy misfortunes have overtaken me!" replied Manuel. "Scarcely had I parted from thee on the last evening when we stood together on these sands than I was taken prisoner by a Barbary corsair and carried to Tunis. All the wealth that I had amassed to ensure prosperity to our union, Irene, was taken from me; and it was but a few weeks ago that I succeeded in escaping with some of the brave fellows who were captured with me. It is true, I have another ship, and am again the captain of a gallant crew; but still I am denuded of those treasures which will alone secure me the favour of the Patriarch."

"Ah, say not so, Manuel!" cried Irene, who had listened to this narrative with tears and in the deepest suspense. "My uncle will not refuse your suit when he sees that his niece's happiness depends upon its success. This is

the Sabbath evening—he is now at the tomb of his brother—

Irene shrieked: for at this moment a report like that of a pistol was heard, and a rocket shot from the ocean into the air.

"That is a signal which I full well comprehend, dear girl," said Manuel, hastily: "it is made by the crew of a boat which I sent on shore, ere I left my ship to fetch water. I must now hasten back—I must leave thee, Irene—perhaps for ever."

"For ever—for ever—Oh! use not words so devoid of hope as these," ejaculated the lovely maid, while tears stole down her cheeks again. "Oh! that I could accompany you in your voyages on the dangerous deep! The whistling of the wind, the roar of the billows would be like of music in my ears, so that you were nigh."

"Wherefore express a wish which thou wilt not fulfil?" cried Manuel, hastily. "Irene" he added in a rapid and earnest tone. "your uncle will never consent to our union—nay, interrupt me not—I know that he would rather die than allow his niece to be espoused by me. The woman that fondly loves, leaves father—mother—brother—sister, and all kindred for him to whom she is devoted—else is not her love sincere. Wilt thou then, refuse to follow the fortunes of the man who would lay down his life for you? Wilt thou confide thyself to the honour of him who loves thee with an affection so pure and chaste, that he is rather like a child in thy presence, to do thy bidding and execute thy will; whereas he could take advantage of the confidence which grants him those stolen interviews to bear thee away by force? Consent to accompany me, Irene!—my gallant bark shall sail for the Morea, and at the first town at

which we touch, our hands shall be united according to the ceremonies of our holy creed.

The maiden leant her head upon the breast of her lover, and made no reply. Sweet were the visions of bliss which filled her imagination—persuasive was the voice of Manuel: and yielding was she in that moment when her tenderness was thus appealed to. The young man placed his arms round her waist: they walked a few paces upon the shore thus clinging to each other; and, when they stopped, it was at the prow of the boat.

"Wilt thou bestow this confidence upon thy lover?" demanded Manuel, in a soft and melancholy tone.

"I dare not go—and yet my heart tells me I may not refuse," whispered Irene.

Manuel saw that she consented. He raised her gently in his arms—placed her upon his cloak in the skiff—leaped in himself—and speedily pushed it away from the shore. When they were at a little distance from the land, Manuel suddenly dropt his oars and exclaimed, "Irene, dost thou repent?"

"I do not," said the maiden, encouraged by the behaviour of her lover.

Not another word was spoken until the boat reached the vessel, which lay at a short distance. Manuel assisted his beautiful companion on board—conducted her to a cabin fitted up in the most costly manner—and then left her for a moment to superintend the working of the ship, as it set sail for the Morea.

A favourable breeze propelled the gallant bark towards the coasts of Greece; and Manuel resolved upon touching at Koran. True to his promise, he procured the sanction of the Church to his union with the beautiful Irene

and the Patriarch's niece became the captain's bride.

After having passed a few days at Koron, Manuel declared that circumstances compelled him to embark for another cruise; and Irene insisted on accompanying her husband in his perilous voyages. He implored her to remain with the friends, at whose residence they had been staying during the few days of the honeymoon, while he should repair to Scio, divulge the secret of their union to her uncle, and implore his forgiveness of his lovely niece: but nothing could induce her to separate from one whom she looked upon as her only source of earthly happiness. And when she clung to him so fondly, and raised her melting black eyes to his, while she implored him not to oppose her wish to accompany him, he felt that he should be depriving himself of a sincere and tender companion, were he to leave her behind him. She accordingly returned with her gallant Greek husband to the ship, which immediately set sail once more.

The cabin occupied by Irene and Manuel, was formed by the elevation of the prop of the vessel and beneath their place of abode, or in what would be called the gun room of a modern brig there was some cause of suspicion or uneasiness to Manuel, which did not escape the affectionate solicitude of Irene. As soon as she became familiar with the various departments of the ship, and the routine of a sailor's life, she perceived that the gun-room was closely guarded—that the door of communication with it was always secured by Manuel himself—and that no one save himself was allowed to enter that division of the vessel. Several times in the night would he rise from his couch, and hasten to ascertain if all were secure in that quarter;

and if ever the slightest noise from thence met his ears, he would turn pale, pace the deck of his cabin with uneasy steps, and appear embarrassed in manner when addressed by his wife,

All these little circumstances—hardly perceptible to the rough sailors—were noticed by Irene; and at length she began to connect in her imagination some unpleasant suspicions—suspicions, however, which she could not rightly define—with the evident mystery of the gun-room. She had a female attendant with her: but her servant could not satisfy her curiosity relative to the subject of her alarms. Irene was of too noble a disposition to attempt to pry into her husband's actions; but at the same time, the little circumstances above related began to prove source of uneasiness and disquietude.

Several days had elapsed since they had sailed from Koron, and they were still out of sight of land. She began to suspect that Scio was not the immediate point of destination; and this idea did not contribute to her consolation. Incapable, however, of adopting any illegitimate means of clearing up the extraordinary doubts and fears which had crept into her mind—and determined to rely upon the frankness of her husband for an explanation—she sought an opportunity one morning to introduce the subject of her thoughts into the conversation.

"Irene," answered Manuel, "I am glad that you have thus given me an opportunity of addressing you seriously on a matter of vital importance to all of us. Confident in the sincerity of your affection——"

"Did you ever doubt it?" asked the Greek lady in a reproachful tone; and was that the cause

wherefore I was not allowed to participate in all your secrets?"

"No—oh, no!" answered Manuel; "but I knew not whether your affections were strong enough to induce you to follow the fortunes of one——"

"Ere we were united," interrupted Irene, "my love would have prompted me to follow you to the scaffold, even had the paths which led to it been those of crime; and now—now that we are indissolubly united by the minister of heaven, my duty, besides my affection, is an additional link to bind me to you."

"Be careful, Irene, how you rely upon me as yet untried amount of your affection," said Manuel. "You have hitherto known me only as the intrepid Greek sailor, conducting his vessel over the Egean seas for purposes (as you suppose) of trade, and reckless of the dangers which beset the traveller upon that trackless waste. You have known me in the character of an honourable aspirant to the favours of that fortune who has fled from my arms and you asked not much concerning my pursuits, my origin, or even my name, so long as I testified my love for you! But, doubtless, the ideas you have formed of my character are elevated and proud; and you would weep to see the delusion suddenly swept away by an avowal more terrible, perhaps, than the sudden bursting of the storm over the before tranquil ocean. What, if I were something more—or haply something less—than what I seem? Wouldst thou still love me?"

"I would—I would," answered Irene, alarmed at her husband's strange discourse.

"Then know the truth at once," abruptly replied Manuel, his eyes lighting up with a sudden fire, and his proud veins swelling

upon his forehead. "You have heard of the terrible pirate who has so long infested the Egean seas—you have heard of the plans which the Patriarch devised to ensnare him, and you know how futile proved these schemes! Irene, that formidable pirate," added Manuel, in a solemn tone, while his wife listened with the most breathless attention,—"that formidable pirate is at hand—is near you,—is the commander of this vessel,—is the man to whom you have bound yourself for life—is here!"

"Oh! no—no—it is impossible!" ejaculated Irene; then falling upon the sofa in the cabin where this dread revelation took place, she wept bitterly.

The free vent, which she was thus enabled to give to her tears, consoled and relieved her; and, with the characteristic magnanimity of the mind of the Grecian women, she exclaimed, "Manuel, I am content to follow thee through the perils of this life, even though thou art the pirate whose name is formidable to all the cruisers and islands of the Egean waves."

"Console yourself, Irene," said Manuel taking her hand and kissing it with respect, gratitude, and love; "my name shall no longer be dreaded by Greeks and Ottomans, as it has been. The days of rapine and piracy are past, and now that I possess the choicest treasure which the earth contains, I care not how soon I settle down to an existence of tranquillity and repose. But I have still a task to perform—a vow to accomplish—a pledge to redeem. I have to pay, by my conduct, the ransom that was generously advanced to save my life and painful though the duty be, I dare not fail in the performance of it. My imprisonment in the Castle of the Seven Towers, and the time required to

equip this vessel after my release will account for the long interval that elapsed ere my return to Scio the last time."

"And the duty to which you have alluded—the redemption of your pledge?" said Irene, hastily.

"We are now on our way to Marseilles, where I have to land a prisoner whom I retain in strict confinement in the cabin below," answered Manuel.

"And that prisoner?" exclaimed Irene.

"You shall see him," was the immediate reply. "But, prepare yourself for a strange surprise."

"I am prepared—I am served to support or to undergo all that this world can have in store for me," rejoined Irene.

Manuel took her by the hand and led her down to the door of the gun-room. The sailor, who there stood sentinel with a drawn cutlass in his hand, made way for his captain to pass.

"You shall first enter alone," said Manuel: "I will follow you shortly."

As he uttered those words, he opened the door, and Irene obeying a mechanical impulse immediately entered the cabin. She screamed, and would have fallen senseless to the floor, had she not been caught in the arms of Avedick, her uncle!

"Irene herel" ejaculated the Patriarch, as he adopted the necessary means to recover her; "has she too fallen into the power of this brigand of the ocean. Oh! unhappy girl!"

"Is it a dream?" murmured the Greek lady, as she opened her eyes and gazed wildly around her; "is it a dream?—do I hear and see aright? Or am I labouring under the influence of a delusion?"

"Calm yourself, Irene," said the Patriarch: "it is indeed your uncle whom you meet a prisoner herel"

"A prisoner!" ejaculated Irene.

Oh! wherefore does he—does Manuel retain thee in captivity? This moment shall your bonds be cast off—"

"Alas! thou canst possess no influence with the Corsair," interrupted Avedick mournfully.

"I possess that influence," answered Irene. "which the affection of the heat——"

"Stay, imprudent girl!" cried the Patriarch placing his hand before the lips of his niece: "do not suffer me to believe thee guilty of an unlawful love for the wretch who has dragged us both from our peaceful homes."

"Guilt and Irene are unacquainted with each other," said the lady firmly. "Uncle," she added in a melancholy and tremulous tone, "I knew not the character of Manuel when I first loved him; and when once that passion had become deeply rooted in my bosom, I observed its dictates blindly, as other mortals are constrained to do. And now reproach—revile me uncle, for having acted in this without your knowledge and consent; but, oh! I shall feel relieved when the truth is told! Do not look upon me as the abandoned victim of illicit love; for, know that Irene is the Corsair's bride!"

"Unhappy girl!" cried the Patriarch: "wilt thou bring dishonour upon our spotless family?"

Irene threw herself at her uncle's feet and wept bitterly; while the Patriarch himself sat wrapped up—in the deepest meditation. At that moment the door of the cabin opened, and Manuel stood before them. His first impulse was to rush forward and raise his young bride from her suppliant posture. He then addressed Avedick in the following manner:—

"I can well divine the cause of this scene, Irene has confessed to you that she is the pirate's

## THE LOVES OF THE HAREM

wife—and the haughty blood of Avedick spurns the alliance. Be it so: the Patriarch's niece will, however, experience that affectionate solicitude at my hands, which does not always accompany the unions that are formed upon principles of mere sordid interest. Irene is now my wife—partner of my worldly fortunes; and she knows that she will not long have to blush for the reputation of her husband. With regard to yourself, I am pledged to deliver you up to the authorities empowered to receive you at Marseilles, for which port we are steering. Willingly—Oh! willingly would I release the relative of my wife—but I have a solemn vow to fulfil and were you her father, I dare not retract.”

“And by whose directions have you been guilty of this flagrant violation of every law, whether domestic or national?” demanded the patriarch, curbing the rising anger of his breast for the purpose of obtaining the information he required.

“The Marquis of Argental paid the ransom demanded for my life and liberty,” answered Manuel, “and by his orders are my actions guided.”

“Ferriol! Ferriol! the Marquis of Argental!” murmured the Patriarch; and throwing himself upon the sofa in his cabin, he gave way to the terrible reflections aroused within him by the conviction that some dread fate was in store for him.

“Comfort your uncle, Irene,” said the Corsair; “but—remember—the revelations I have made concerning my employers in this transaction are as sacred as our marriage vows.”

Manuel retired as he uttered these words; and Irene hastened to use her utmost endeavours to console the unfortunate Patriarch.

the rapid progress of the vessel to Marseilles. During the remainder of the voyage, after the above explanations and discoveries, Irene was constant in her endeavours to instil hope and tranquillity into the mind of her uncle; and often and often did she fall upon her knees in the presence of her husband, and implore his mercy in favour of her afflicted relative. Manuel was inexorable: he could have laid down his life to afford Irene pleasure, but he could not forget his honour. All corsair as he was, he was just after his own fashion!

When they had reached Marseilles, Manuel hastened on shore, and presented letters from Ferriol to the commander of the garrison. In a few days he intimated to Irene that she must take leave of her uncle, as the authorities were about to fetch him from the vessel. Again did the beautiful niece of the Patriarch endeavour to soften the heart of her husband: he shed tears,—but he could not be induced to forfeit his solemn pledge. Dreadful was the parting between Irene and the Patriarch; and Manuel bore her, almost lifeless, from the arms of her relative, and consigned her to the care of her female attendant in her own cabin.

Hasty but terrible were the preparations for the landing of Avedick. The commandant of the garrison of Marseilles, attended by two confidential soldiers, were alone present in the Patriarch's cabin besides Manuel, previous to the performance of a ceremony which made even the pirate's blood run cold in his veins. According to Ferriol's instruction the commandant had provided a iron mask, which his two soldiers fixed over the countenance of the unfortunate captive, whose entreaties and prayers for mercy pro-



ed unavailing although his anguish wrung tears from the eyes of his persecutors. As soon as the iron mask was fixed by means of a steel band that was made secure behind the victim's head, he was closely muffled in a cloak, and conducted, at the dead hour of night, to a boat which lay alongside and was waiting for him. The commandant placed in Manuel's hands a certificate of having received the prisoner, according to Ferriol's directions; and the boat pushed away from the vessel, bearing with it the unhappy victim of the treacherous policy of Marquis of Argental.

Avedick was not suffered to remain long at Marseilles. The greatest precautions were adopted to prevent strangers from obtaining a glimpse of him; and in a short time the fortress of Pignerol received the *Man with the Iron Mask*!

Manuel's ship set sail on its return to Constantinople; and, on his arrival in that city, he hastened to present his certificate to the Marquis of Argental. The Ambassador was overjoyed at the success of his scheme, and, according to promise, would have laden the pirate with wealth and costly gifts; but Manuel refused all recompense,

"I made a vow to fulfil your commands" said he, "in return for the life and freedom which you purchased for me and my gallant crew; and I have not flown from my word."

Manuel disposed of his ship, divided the produce of the sale between himself and the crew; and then repaired, with Irene, to the island of Scio, where he built a modest dwelling near the very spot on which their stolen interviews had once taken. His beloved wife did not, however, long survive their return to the island where she had once passed some

happy hours. The fate of her uncle preyed deeply upon her mind; and, as she forebore to breathe her sorrows and their cause to her husband, her sufferings were the more acute, because she was compelled to retain them all in her own bosom. She presented him with one pledge of their mutual affection—a lovely boy; and a few weeks afterwards Manuel followed her to the tomb,

Deprived of the only being he had ever loved, Manuel soon became wearied of a life of inactivity and solitude. He longed to tempt the dangers of the ocean once again and the circumstance of accidentally meeting with some of his former crew, determined him to recommence the corsair's life of excitement and change. Scarcely was the plan resolved upon, when it was put into execution; for to think and to act with Manuel were the same. Once more did he become the captain of a gallant vessel, manned with a faithful and daring crew; and, in order to remove from his path as many chances of misfortune as possible, he ceased to ravage the islands of the Egean sea or to plunder Ottoman vessels; but his piracies were confined to attacks upon those ships that sailed beneath flags with which the Sublime Porte was at variance. In this manner he amassed a fortune, and saved his life from any farther experimental sojourns in the Castle of the Seven Towers, with the gibbet in close perspective.

Manuel lived to a good old age; and terminated a chequered existence in a splendid mansion which he had built at Constantinople. On his death-bed, he confided the secret connected with the Greek Patriarch to his only son, who had entered the service of the Hospodar of Moldavia; and from that period until the present

time has the narrative of Avedick's fate been handed down from father to son, in the family whose wealth and prosperity were founded by Manuel the Corsair.

#### CHAPTER XXIV. THE GARDEN OF SHADY AVENUES.

THE story which Khalil had just concluded was listened to with perhaps a deeper interest than that which had been bestowed on any of his preceding narratives. All his listeners had heard something in reference to the Man with the Iron Mask: and the bold theory enunciated in the tale for the purpose of accounting for who he was had startled and surprised them.

"The carrying off of the Greek Patriarch Avedick," observed Daltaban Pasha, "is a traditional fact well preserved in our history, and which will not admit of a moment's doubt. But this is the first time I ever heard it asserted that Avedick and the masked prisoner of the Pignerol were identical."

"I have studied the question well," responded Khalil: "I have had an opportunity of examining certain State documents preserved amongst the Ottoman archives: and I have come to the settled conclusion that my theory is the correct one."

"But has not history otherwise accounted for the Man with the Iron Mask?" inquired Lucas Vassilo.

"There have been many writers," replied Khalil. "who have pretended to explain who that personage was, and who have perverted history for that object. Upon no less than six different individuals have historians endeavoured to fix the identity of the

Man with the Iron Mask. But of those six personages, two are purely imaginary—the mask not have been made for them, but they being created expressly for the mask."

"And who are these two fictitious individuals?" inquired Lucas Vassilo.

"The first," rejoined Khalil, "is represented to have been a twin-brother of Louis XIV.: the second is said to have been a natural son of his mother, Anne of Austria. These theories can easily be disproved. The supposition of the twin-brother vanishes before a little examination into the customs and manners of the Court of France. The Queens of France always gave birth to their children in public—that is to say, in a large chamber in which were assembled the Royal Family, the Princes of the Blood, the great officers of the Crown, and the whole train of courtiers, if they thought proper to attend. In the case of Anne of Austria, wife of Louis XIII., who had been nearly twenty years married before she became a mother, all the aristocracy of Paris had assembled in the palace; and the chamber was crowded to excess. It would have been therefore impossible to conceal the birth of a second child, even if there had been any motive for so doing. The next supposition is less ridiculous perhaps, though certainly not less false—I mean that of a natural son of Anne of Austria. Had such a son been born the birth must have taken place during the life of her husband, when there would have been so much danger in the intrigue. Besides, she was hated by her husband, and hated by the Minister Richelieu, who caused her to be incessantly surrounded by spies, and who would have been only too glad to expose and punish her."

"And the other theories," said Lucas Vassilo, "in respect to the Iron Mask?"

"I have disposed of the two fictitious creations," continued the young Turk: "let us now briefly examine the four real historical personages who are put forward as claimants to the identity. The first is Fouquet, Superintendent of the Finances in the time of Louis XIII. He was arrested for malversation, in the early part of the reign of Louis XIV.; and though he was certainly a prisoner in the Pignerol no secrecy was observed in respect to his captivity—while the circumstances and date of his death are well known. The second historical character who has been put forward as the Iron Mask is the Count de Vermandois, a natural son of Louis XIV. and Madame La Vallere. But it is well known that this nobleman was killed, or else died of excessive drinking, at the siege of Courtrai twenty years before the man with the Iron Mask was seen at Pignerol or in the Bastille. The third historical personage whose existence is supposed to have been concealed under the Iron Mask, was the Duke of Monmouth, the natural son of Charles II, of England. It is pretended that having rebelled against his uncle James II, his life was spared and he was doomed to a state of perpetual imprisonment in France; whereas it is notorious that the Duke of Monmouth was publicly beheaded in London in the year 1685. The fourth historical personage is said to have been an emissary of the Duke of Mantua; and having thwarted the politics of the King of France, was seized upon and thrust into a terrible captivity. But it was not necessary to take so much trouble for the purpose of disposing of such an individual: one single word

from the powerful King of France would have compelled the feeble Mantuan State to withdraw its obnoxious envoy. Besides, no Mantuan Minister was really ever missed at all. Therefore, all these arguments being duly considered, there remains but one person whose identity with the Man in the Iron Mask is at all consistent with sound reasoning or historical proofs; and this personage was the Greek Patriarch Avedick."

Khalil's words were listened to with the profoundest attention—especially by the beautiful Zuleika who experienced a sort of pride in possessing the love of one whose intellect was so richly endowed. The young Turk has spoken with a certain degree of enthusiasm: there was the colour of animation upon his cheeks—his eyes shone with brighter fires than they habitually gave forth; and to Zuleika's gaze he never looked more handsome. But there was another lady present who entertained precisely the same view:—and this was Ismilda.

The reader has seen enough of the Pasha's wife to comprehend that she was a woman of the strongest passions, with no sentiment of real love in her soul—but merely the gross craving of a licentious temperament. She had longed to clasp Khalil in her arms as the object of her sensual phantasy: but when Julian Meleda had been introduced to her presence—or when Lucas Vassilo found his way to her apartment—she had with no great difficulty transferred towards them for the moment the strong yearning passion which she had formed and cherished for Khalil. But now that she beheld them all three together, infinitely did she prefer the young Turk to the two Greeks. Handsome in countenance and symmetrical in form though Lucas

and Julian were—yet far handsomer in features and more perfect in shape did young Khalil seem to the eyes of Ismilda.

Gradually, during the telling of his tale, had the ladies withdrawn their veils from their countenances—Daltaban Pasha offering no remonstrance either by word or look; and thus Ismilda had been enabled—while to all appearance looking down—to feast her eyes devouringly upon the countenance of the handsome young Turk. Then, as Ismilda occasionally glanced towards her husband, and compared his appearance with that of Khalil, she experienced a strong shuddering at the idea of being linked to such a man—a loathing and a hatred for the man himself. Certain dark thoughts and iniquitous hopes, which on former occasions had been agitating in her mind, were now strengthened; and the longer she looked at Khalil the more she abhorred her husband Daltaban.

The caique floated onward over the crystal water; and the three young gentlemen, being seated as it were apart from the ladies and the Pasha, could only maintain a general conversation, and could not specially or whisperingly address themselves individually to the objects of their love. Nor did Khalil make any attempt to interrupt this arrangement: for it suited him well enough, inasmuch as he had his own particular game to play—and a part thereof was to disseminate in Ismilda's presence the sentiment of his devoted love for Zuleika.

As the caique pursued its way, impelled by the stalwart rowers, it presently reached the verge of a beauteous garden, which by a succession of terraces reached up to an eminence at least a hundred feet above the bank, to which

the grounds came sloping down. Upon that eminence stood a picturesque kiosk, or summer residence. This dwelling and domain—belonging to a Pasha with whom Daltaban was on terms of intimacy—were altogether the most charming and attractive of all the delightful spots which the occupants of the caique had as yet beheld during the present excursion. The gardens were exquisitely laid out and were varied with parterres of flowers and shady avenues of citron and orange-trees. Numerous fountains threw up their crystal waters, which fell back into spacious marble basins; while arbours adorned with bright flowers or with hanging fruits, gave promise of cool retreat from the sultriness of the sun.

The two Greeks and Khalil, who had never before seen this delightful spot, expressed their admiration in the warmest terms; and Lucio Vassilo exclaimed, "I would give much for a ramble in these inviting grounds."

"By the Prophet!" said the Pasha, "your wish can be easily gratified: for the owner of this domain is an old and valued friend of mine; and though I happen to know that he is not at present at his kiosk but is employed in his high ministerial duties at Constantinople,—yet may we, without fear of giving offence, land from our boat and ramble through these grounds."

Having thus spoken, the Pasha made a sign to his slaves, who speedily ran the caique alongside the landing-steps; and the party stepped ashore. A slave followed with Daltaban's chibouque, for which he had likewise made a sign; and the worthy Pasha, making straight for one of the arbours above alluded to, ensconced himself in that cool retreat. There his pipe being

lighted, his lordship began to inhale the fragrant vapour which passed through aromatic water; and being in an excellent humour, he said, "Now, go, all of ye, and amuse yourselves with the recreation of a ramble."

At that same moment Khalil fixed his eyes significantly upon Zuleika; and seized the opportunity to whisper hastily in her ear. "Make some excuse, dearest, to remain with your uncle."

The young lady responded by a glance of equal meaning; and seating herself with an air of languor she said, "I for one must beg to be excused from walking through these grounds: for I am already faint with the heat of the sun."

"Go ye, then, who choose," said the Pasha: and as his look which he swept around, included his wife in the permission thus accorded, he added. "But keep ye all together.—I will have no scandal excited by separation into pairs. If ye meet any of the slaves of the establishment, tell them that ye came with their master's friend, Daltaban Pasha."

Ismilda, Gulnare and Thyrza—drawing their veils over their countenances—moved away from the front of the arbour, followed by the three young gentlemen,—Zuleika remaining behind to bear her uncle company. So long as the party of the three ladies and the three young gentlemen were within view of the arbour, they kept together,—Ismilda and her daughters-in-law walking in front—Khalil and the two Greeks following. But on entering a shady avenue completely concealed from the range of the Pasha's vision, Lucas and Julian flung appealing glances upon Khalil, as much as to beseech that he would afford them opportunities of conversing apart with the objects of their love. This

arrangement precisely suited the young Turk's views, inasmuch as he wished to be left alone with Ismilda—for which reason he had whisperingly bade Zuleika remain with her uncle. On the other hand, Ismilda was most anxious to be left alone with Khalil: while Gulnare and Thyrza were wondering in the depths of their youthful loving hearts whether the ramble was to be characterized by a cold formality, or whether they would be allowed opportunities of listening to a few tender things from the lips of their lovers.

"Do you not think it is cruel, Signor Khalil," asked Ismilda, "to impose any restraint upon these fond couples, who have doubtless much to say between themselves?"

"I should have hinted the same," responded the young Turk, "if I had dared anticipate your ladyship's considerate views."

"At the risk of drawing down upon my head the anger of the Pasha," continued Ismilda, "I will favour the secret wishes of these loving ones. But it were well, young ladies," she added thus specially addressing herself to Gulnare and Thyrza, "if you promise to abstain from hinting to your father that I suffered that which he may deem an indiscretion."

Gulnare and Thyrza readily gave the required promise. Lucas hastened forward to take the hand of the elder sister; Julian Meleda did the same by the younger, Khalil and Ismilda now remained alone together.

From the principal avenue where this scene took place, three or four smaller ones diverged,—vistas of umbrageous verdure where the thick canopies of green kept off the sultry beams of the sun, and where the stems of the trees themselves shot up from

amidst the borders of flowers. Into one of these diverging avenues, Lucas and Gulnare wandered: Julian and Thyra into another: Khalil with Ismilda into a third.

"Beautiful, handsome Khalil!" said the Pasha's wife, now leaning upon his arm, throwing back her veil, and looking with a deep sensuous languor up into his countenance; "my hope is gratified—my fond anticipations are fulfilled. Methought at the outset of this excursion fortune would favour us with an opportunity of being together; for I had so much to say to you!"

"And I, Ismilda, entertained the same hope—buoyed myself up with the same anticipation!" replied the young Turk, doing violence to his feelings by forcing himself to gaze with every appearance of impassioned tenderness upon the Pasha's wife.

"Ah, then you do really love me!" murmured Ismilda, pressing the arm to which she clung; and resting with her glowing palpitating bosom against it.

"Have you ever doubted it, Ismilda?" asked Khalil, throwing additional tenderness into his words and looks, "Has there been aught on my part to make you mistrust the sincerity of that affection on which I have pledged towards you—and the best proof is, as you have seen, I have renounced Zuleika for your sake?"

"No—I have not doubted your love," responded Ismilda. "But it is so sweet to receive the assurance of it often and often! You give me that assurance now?"

"I give it you now, Ismilda—as I have given it to you before!" rejoined Khalil.

"And you know—Oh! you must feel," murmured the Pasha's wife, "that my heart is wholly and solely thine! Your presence fills me with raptures never before ex-

perienced. I feel towards you, my beautiful Khalil, as if I could do some deed—great, terrible, or desperate—I know not what—in order that we might ever be together, never to separate!"

"This is strong language, Ismilda," said Khalil—but not in a tone of remonstrance: on the contrary, it was with an air as if he experienced a deep heartfelt joy at finding himself the object of so much love. "But you know that it is impossible that we can be always together!"

"How impossible?" asked Ismilda, putting back with one fair hand the luxuriant masses of her pale amber hair, and with the other pressing the arm to which she clung. "How impossible?" she again asked. "Are you not your own master?—have you not declared to my husband that you are descended from an ancient patrician family of Asia Minor?—are you not wealthy?—in a word, have you not on your own side every right of happiness—every privilege of beatific enjoyment which the circumstances of this world can afford?"

"Yes—it is so," responded Khalil. "But yourself, Ismilda—"

"Oh! I," she ejaculated, with an expression of firmness suddenly appearing upon her countenance—"I am perhaps not so completely chained down to a state of may be termed matrimonial slavery, as you, my dear Khalil, may possibly imagine!"

"I do not understand you, Ismilda," answered the young Turk, affecting a look of bewilderment: and he seemed also to ask by the eloquence of his eyes for an explanation.

"Just now you said it was impossible that we could always be together," resumed Ismilda. "But what is impossible for the woman who really and truly loves? Was

the word *impossible* in the dictionary of the great heroes who rising from obscurity in different countries and ages of the world, have achieved empire for themselves? And if man have his sphere in which he thus triumphs as it were over the impossible, think you not that woman has likewise her sphere in which she can perform a similar part? Man therefore may become omnipotent on the arena of warfare or of politics: but love opens a field for the conquests and the victories of woman. Ah, my dear Khalil, little think those *masters* who bear the name of *husbands*—little think they when shutting us up in our harems, that they fail to circumscribe our spirits within the walls to which they confine us. "Oh, no!—you yourself have seen the contrary!"

"And now, my dear Ismilda," asked Khalil, "to what is all this to lead? So much eloquence flowing in the silvery tones of your sweet melodious voice, is not to be thrown away in mere idle words upon the empty air."

"Far from it!" replied the Pasha's wife, enraptured with the charming compliment which the young Turk had just bestowed upon her. "I meant you to understand, my beautiful—my handsome Khalil, that nothing is impossible for the woman who loves deeply and tenderly, and who is resolved to consult her own and her lover's happiness beyond all other considerations. Such is the case with me. Ah, Khalil! I experience towards *you* feelings altogether different from those that ever found place in my heart before!—and under this influence I just now said that I could do anything—yes, even a deed of terror or of desperation—in order to ensure our mutual happiness!"

"Yes, Ismilda—this is a verita-

ble love!" murmured Khalil, gazing upon her with looks that seemed to be brimful of passion: "and it is the same love that I experience towards you! But then your husband?"

"Ah, my husband!" ejaculated Ismilda, with bitterness: "he is now the only barrier to our complete felicity. When I look upon him, Khalil, after looking upon you, I am seized with a boiling indignation—a rage—a fury—a horror—a loathing—an aversion—"

"Ismilda, these are strong terms!" said Khalil, who, though he was playing a certain part, yet in the natural rectitude of his disposition was shocked and horrified at manner in which he heard a wife thus speak of her husband.

"Yes—the terms may be strong," said Ismilda: "but they only convey my meaning. Answer me, Khalil!" she demanded, with a sort of abruptness as she gazed up into his countenance: "do you wish us to be altogether united?—will you become altogether mine as I am prepared to become altogether thine? Shall we unite our riches and dwell together in luxury and enjoyment, as our hearts shall be united so that we may revel in the bliss of love? If you mean all this, the task is easy of accomplishment:—and she again pressed his arm against her voluptuously heaving bust.

"How Ismilda? I understand you not," said Khalil: and yet by his looks he encouraged her to proceed.

"I know where the Pasha keeps his treasures," continued the iniquitous, woman; "and they are immense. As for his life—is it not in our hands?"

"And would you take it, Ismilda?" inquired the young Turk, in a low deep voice.

"I would take it for *your* sake!"

responded Ismilda. "Oh, I would plunge myself into any crime that I might enjoy your love!"—and now she seized his hand and pressed it ardently to her lips.

"But the danger of detection?" said Khalil: "and the horrible punishment which would follow such detection?"

"There need be no danger," proceeded Ismilda: then fixing her beauteous azure eyes steadfastly upon her youthful companion, she said, "Have you forgotten the discourse in the arbour of the garden last evening, when you had finished your beautiful tale of the loves of Prince Djem and Philippina Helena?"

"I do remember that some discourse followed," said Khalil, as if endeavouring to gather up his fugitive thoughts: "but of its precise nature I have but a vague and dim reminiscence."

"Do you not recollect, Khalil," asked Ismilda, for a moment speaking with some show of petulance, as if impatient at thus being compelled to detail her projects minutely step by step, without being in the slightest degree assisted by any suggestive word on the young Turk's part,—"do you not remember that your friend Lucas Vassilo spoke of that subtle poison by means of which the Borgias in Italy as well as the Imperial family of Russia—"

"Ah, I recollect!" exclaimed Khalil. "It was of the crystallized arsenic that he spoke:"—and then he added, as if quite in an indifferent manner, "I could have thrown in some information if I had chosen—but I feared lest the topic should be a distasteful one to yourself and the other ladies."

"And that information?" demanded Ismilda quickly.

"Amongst other studies to which I have at times given my attention," replied Khalil, "is that of chemistry; and if it suited my

purpose to distil any such deadly venom as that which the Borgias used, and of which Lucas Vassilo spoke, it were a matter of easy accomplishment."

"Say you so?" ejaculated Ismilda, with an expression of sudden fiendlike joy upon her countenance: "say you so? she repeated with eagerness, as she gazed up towards him.

"I never boast," answered Khalil, "of that which I cannot perform. Look you!" he continued, pointing to a parterre of flowers. "Beautiful as these are to the eye and fragrant to the sense—delicious in all respect to the vision and to the nostril—there is scarcely one of them which does not contain the principle of some deadly venom. It is the same with the very soil on which we tread—aye, even with the pebbles which give brilliancy to this gravel-walk:"—for the young Turk knew full well that by this latter exaggeration he could easily impose upon the ignorance of Ismilda—the more especially, that her credulity flowed in the same channel along with her iniquitous hopes and designs.

"And that crystallized arsenic?" she hastily demanded.

Khalil stooped down: and picking up some half dozen bright looking pebbles, he said, "I hold in my hand the element of a poison sufficient to work out all the purposes for which that crystallized arsenic was ever used by the Borgias, or by the imperial family of Russia. Without any alchemical apparatus in my own chamber, and by the simple aids of fire and water, could I eliminate a venom which when crystallized by exposure to an intense heat——"

"Enough, Khalil—enough!" interrupted that vile but beautiful woman, pressing his arm with feelings of a deep, concentrated,



diabolical joy: "supreme happiness is within our reach! Give me this poison—and for your sake I will use it!"

"But the danger?" suggested Khalil, as if hesitating with dismay.

"No, no—I will be cautious!" responded Ismilda. "The deed shall not be done in a moment, if it shall take days—even weeks, if you will, in its accomplishment; and I shall be enabled to wait patiently, knowing that it will be accomplished. Did not Lucas Vassilo speak of death by slow degrees—pining and wasting away, and dying and last without the indication of an evidence of the true cause of such dissolution. This is the mode in which it shall be accomplished. And now say one word, Khalil—only one word, to make me understand that you assent; and I will not shrink from a crime to ensure our happiness. Emancipating myself from the loathed slavery in which my old husband's nauseous love keeps me enthralled, I will transfer my allegiance to you as my new lord and master; and though you be already rich, Khalil, yet I will put you in possession of wealth to an extent far greater than that to which your own resources can possibly reach. Now then, my Khalil, breathe the word of assent from your lips!"

"It is spoken, my Ismilda, responded the young Turk; "and I will do all that you require;"—then concealing the pebbles in some portions of his dress, he added, "I have now about me that which will ensure our happiness. But tell me, Ismilda—how am I again to reckon upon the opportunity of seeing you speedily? For the two past nights—"

"Ah! you have been disappointed, my beloved Khalil!" exclaimed the Pasha's wife: "your

disappointment has not however transcended mine. Circumstances have occurred—But of these no matter! I will devise some scheme by which, through the agency of the faithful Amina, I will accomplish a meeting. And think you if we thus meet to-night, you can in the interval prepare that poison which it shall be my task to administer?"

"Yes—I can do so," responded Khalil: then, as he perceived that Ismilda was becoming more and more impassioned in her caresses, he said, as if smitten with sudden alarm, "but we have been unmindful of how time has elapsed! The Pasha might take it into his head to come in search of us: and if he should find that we have separated from his daughters and my Greek friends—"

At this moment the young Turk and Ismilda beheld Lucas and Gulnare advancing from the extremity of the avenue; and Khalil at once disengaged himself from Ismilda's arm, which had until now been thrown around his waist.

"Let us be cautious," he hurriedly said: "let us seem as if we had merely been roaming in friendly companionship here."

They were speedily joined by Lucas and Gulnare, as well as by Julian and Ihyrza: and the party being thus reassembled, Khalil suggested the propriety of returning to the spot where they had left the Pasha and Zuleika. The three ladies, again drawing their veils over their countenances, advanced in front: the three young gentlemen followed at a short interval; and thus every appearance of strictest decorum and propriety being maintained, they bent their way towards the harbour in which they had left Daltaban Pasha and the beautiful Zuleika about an hour back.

The Pasha was sleeping sound-

ly on the ottoman in that shady bower—the chibouque having fallen from his hand when slumber had overtaken him. But Zuleika was not to be seen.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### ZULEIKA'S ADVENTURE

IT was instantly supposed that the Kadiasker's beautiful daughter must have returned to the bottom of the garden, at the distance of about a hundred yards from the harbour. Thither the party repaired—not choosing to disturb the Pasha until they should have learnt from Zuleika how long he had been sleeping, so that they might judge whether he had slumbered sufficiently for his comfort. As they drew near the caique, the slaves who had been reposing on the seats, started up in readiness to take to their oars: but Zuleika was not to be seen—there was no occupant of the cushioned divans beneath the sumptuous canopy.

In reply to the hastily put queries relative to Zuleika, the slaves declared that the young lady had not returned to the boat, and that she had not been seen since the one who had conveyed the chibouque to the harbour, left her there with the Pasha.

"Something has occurred to our dear cousin!" exclaimed Gulnare, now seized with affright.

"Oh, let us speed in search of her!" ejaculated Thyrsa.

"Doubtless," observed Ismilda coolly, "she availed herself of the Pasha's sleep to take a walk in the grounds; and by this time perhaps she has returned to the harbour. Let us go and see.

Thither they all sped back; and they found Daltaban Pasha just awakening from his nap. The disappearance of Zuleika was at once mentioned to his lordship.

"By the Prophet!" he exclaimed,

"I know not what has become of my niece. The last recollection I have of what passed before slumber stole upon me, is that she was seated there, upon that ottoman—and at my request she sang me some charming air, in the midst of which I am constrained to avow that I somewhat uncourteously sank off into repose."

"Then we must go in every direction and search for her!" exclaimed Khalil: "for inasmuch as she was tired, it is scarcely to be supposed she wandered of her own accord away from the harbour—and some mischief may have befallen her."

"Rest assured that she will return," said Ismilda, who was suddenly seized with jealousy at Khalil's conduct.

"We must keep up appearances," the young Turk hastily whispered to her: and then he exclaimed, "away in search of his Excellency's niece!"

With these words Khalil sped off in one direction—while Lucas Vassilo and Julian Meleda each darted away, in distinct routes likewise.

But let us see what in the meantime had really become of the beautiful Zuleika. As the Pasha had said, he solicited her to sing to him, after his wife and his daughters had departed on their ramble with Khalil and the two Greeks; and the young damsel complied with her uncle's request. His lordship soon began to nod and doze—the chibouque dropped from his hand—and he sank back into a profound slumber. Zuleika ceased her singing, and began to give way to her reflections. All of a sudden she fancied that she heard a strange rustling amongst the trees and shrubs in the immediate vicinage of the harbour; she looked round—but all became still. Thinking no more of the

occurrence, she was again relapsing into a reverie, when the rustling was repeated; and impelled by curiosity more than by alarm, she rose and issued from the bower. At that moment she was seized upon by a powerful arm; and a hand forcibly pressed over her mouth, stifled the shriek which was about to issue from her lips. Overcome by excess of terror, the young lady fainted.

The ruffian who had thus seized upon her, darted into a shady avenue, bearing his lovely burden in his arms, and such was his giant strength, that he carried her with as much ease as a nursemaid carries an infant. The masses of screening foliage and embowering verdure enabled him thus to bear off his prize without being perceived by the slaves in the boat or from the windows of the kiosk on the hill: while the party of the three ladies and the three young gentlemen were rambling in the remote quarter of the grounds. The villain speedily reached the boundary-hedge of the garden; he burst through it, still with the unconscious maiden in his arms;—and screened by a line of trees that skirted the bank of the river, he sped on unobserved to a distance where he plunged into the midst of a thick grove. Here Zuleika came back to consciousness—but only to find herself in the power of a black man of herculean form and of hideous countenance.

He had deposited her upon the thick grass within the grove at the instant she began to awaken from the trance into which terror had plunged her; and standing close by, he feasted his gaze upon the beauty of her unveiled countenance, as well as on the charming contours and flowing outlines of her shape. It was in speechless horror that she con-

templated the monster: and starting from her recumbent posture to a suppliant one on her knees, she stretched out her arms and her clasped hands to implore his mercy. He was habited in a white dress, which seemed damp as well as soiled with clay, as if he had been immersed in the water not very long since. And such was indeed the fact: for the wretch was none other than Kara Mesrour—though Zuleika knew him not: for she had never seen the late guardian of her uncle's treasure.

"Who are you? and why have you done this?" she inquired, trembling with affright—still remaining upon her knees—and with her hands outstretched towards him in eloquent appeal for mercy.

"My name is Kara Mesrour," responded the Ethiopian: and I was recently a slave in the service of that old Pasha whom I ere now heard your address in the harbour by the name of uncle."

"A slave in his service?" exclaimed Zuleika, now starting up to her feet, with indignation suddenly supervening on her former access of terror. "Are you a fugitive?"

"Yes—a fugitive," replied Kara Mesrour—"an outcast—one whose very life is hunted after: But I will gratify my revenge and my passion at one and the same moment. What say you, lovely creature, at the thought of becoming the Ethiopian's bride?"

A shriek rang from Zuleika's lips—and she made a movement as if she sought to flee from the spot: but the black grasped her fiercely and forcibly by the wrist—a proceeding which was, however unnecessary, for her limbs had refused to perform their office, and she was transfixed in horror to the spot.

"It is useless for you to attempt

to escape," said Kara Mesrour, with a voice and look of dogged ferocity. "You are in my power; and, fragile thing that you are! I could in a moment crush you in these strong arms of mine!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed Zuleika, a sense of indignation again rising above that of terror: "do you not tremble at the thought of the fearful punishment that will overtake you if you dare so much as injure even a hair of my head?"

"The same punishment will overtake me on other accounts, if I am caught," was Mesrour's brutally delivered response; "and therefore your threats go for nothing. Look you, young maiden! You shall become my bride—and you will not come dowerless to my arms: for the jewels which hang about your person will enable us to revel in pleasure in some far-off place to which we shall repair. Five more minutes will I allow for resting here, and also for such little discourse as may be requisite to establish a thorough understanding between us—and then shall our journey be pursued. But first of all, one kiss from those sweet lips of yours!"

"Stand back, wretch! I will die sooner!" shrieked the wretched Zuleika; and with one desperate jerk, she tore her hand from his grasp.

Then away she sped—through the grove—light as a fawn—swift as the hunted deer did she dart onward,—terror lending wings to her feet. The Ethiopian pursued, giving vent to terrific threats and menaces. He stumbled over a fallen sapling which lay concealed amidst the long grass; and this circumstance increased the interval which Zuleika's speed had already placed between them. Muttering terrible imprecations, Kara Mesrour picked himself up,

and the chase was continued. On sped Zuleika,—running at random—totally ignorant of whether her course took her towards the entrance of the grove, or carried her farther into its labyrinthine depth: while a quick glance flung over her shoulder showed that she was distancing her pursuer. This inspired her with fresh courage; it gave an increased speed to her feet. On she went like the wind; and at the expiration of a few minutes another glance flung back showed her that the Ethiopian was now far behind.

Still the beautiful Zuleika did not relax her speed. She had hitherto been rushing along a path which intersecting the grove afforded her unimpeded progress. She now reached a point whence the path branched off in two directions. The Ethiopian was no longer in sight; and hastening into one of these diverging routes, she fervently hoped that Kara Mesrour would take the other. Still she maintained as much swiftness as her wearied limbs and well nigh exhausted frame would permit,—until an ejaculation of joy suddenly burst from her lips, when a bend in the path brought her in sight of a little habitation.

In the centre of an open space in the grove stood a small kiosk, of light and picturesque architecture. This open space might be about a hundred yards long by sixty in breadth; and it was laid out as a garden surrounded with a low myrtle hedge. There was a lawn all round the kiosk; and then came beds of flowers stretching up to the myrtle hedge—the whole scene being shut in by the surrounding grove.

The sight of this dwelling at once poured a cheering influence into the heart of the Kadiasker's daughter: for she perceived that the front door stood open—and

he therefore felt convinced that the place was not untenanted. Besides, the manner in which the garden was kept, indicated that his was no neglected spot: while its whole appearance forbade the idea that it was the dwelling of any religious anchorite or ascetic who had buried himself in this seclusion. For a seclusion it assuredly was, embowered in the midst of the spacious grove, and as completely shut out by the rampart of trees from all the adjacent scenery as if it were girt by a high surrounding wall.

Looking back, Zuleika was pleased to observe that the Ethiopian was not in sight: and opening a little wicket, the young maiden entered the enclosure. Her light and rapid footsteps in a few moments brought her to the front door; and there she knocked—for she chose not to enter uninvited. But no one answered her summons. She stepped inside to screen herself from the view of the Ethiopian, in case he should seek that spot: and again she knocked at the door. Several minutes elapsed; and still her summons remained unanswered. Could the house be unoccupied after all? It so, she was no more in safety there against the villainous designs of Kara Mesrour, than she had been in the midst of the grove itself. She advanced farther into the dwelling; and entering a room that was neatly, almost genteelly furnished, she was still surprised to encounter no one. A door at the farther extremity of the room stood ajar; and while Zuleika was remaining irresolute how to act, she caught the sound of a voice coming from within some inner apartment to which that partially open door led. She was hastening forward to implore succour and protection against the hideous black; should he happen to make his appear-

ance,—when the words which now caught her ears sounded so strange that she was riveted to the spot near the threshold of the half-opened door.

“Beautiful being!” said the voice, which though evidently a masculine one, was nevertheless somewhat low and feeble, notwithstanding that it was speaking with a sort of ecstasy of tone: “beautiful being! do not vanish from me. Remain there that I may contemplate your charms: for it is with holiest rapture and chastest delight I thus gaze upon you. Oh! myriads of thanks for those looks of ineffable sweetness which you bend upon me! Your dove-like eyes are full of witchery: an angelic light plays upon the masses of your golden hair and upon your starry wings. Beauteous being: are you an angel from paradise thus sent to bless me with your radiant presence? You smile upon me: and, Oh! how sweet is that smile! You extend your hand towards me: is it that I am to accompany you? Yes, yes—it is indeed!—and you are about to waft me to that paradise of yours! There, now! you lift me up from the earth—I feel an ærial lightness as I ascend—my nature has put off all terrestrial grossness of feeling—I am being wafted towards the seventh heaven of love and ecstasy! Oh, it is delicious!”

Here the voice ceased for a few moments; and then it continued again in the following manner;—

“How swiftly do we glide through the air—this air which is so bright and warm! How warm too is the hand with which you sustain me!—how bright and beaming are the looks which you shed upon me! What fragrance does your perfumed hair give to the breeze on which it floats in its long luxuriant golden masses! As

you gather your gauzy robes of azure and white around your sylphid form, you look the angel which you are! Ah, now we are high in the air; and how glorious is the prospect! Looking downward I behold the entire imperial city of Constantinople spread out beneath my feet. I can count its gilded domes—its massive towers—its lofty minarets—its pinnacles, each tipped as with a crescent-star! How bright is the emerald verdure of the gardens belonging to the stately palaces! how beautifully shines the Bosphorus! and how calmly sleeping are the bright waters of the Golden Horn! And through the streets I behold a brilliant cavalcade with sumptuous equipages proceeding along. It is the Sultan going to prayer! Hark! the voice of the muezzin summons the faithful with the cry of *God is great!*”

There was another brief pause of a few moments; and still the wondering, bewildered Zuleika was retained reveted to the spot close by that half opened door.

“We ascend higher and higher,” resumed the voice, whose accents seemed laden with the luxury of ineffable sensations. “Beautiful being, how can I ever sufficiently thank you for thus wafting me away from the gross atmosphere of that world below, up to the purer ether of this Elysian region? But, oh! what delicious music is this that comes softly upon my ears? It is a hymn which the angles in Paradise—those angles to whose sect you yourself belong—are singing in praise of the great Allah. Delicious harmony!—sweetest and softest that ever came upon my ears! And now earth grows smaller—and we approach nearer to heaven. Oh! this is indeed ecstasy unparalleled—bliss ineffable!”

Here the voice lost itself as it were in a long sigh of pleasure;

and Zuleika was utterly bewildered what to think of all she had just heard. She knew not whether to ascribe it to the ravings of some unfortunate maniac, or to an invalid in the delirium of fever. Not merely did a strange feeling of curiosity possess her: but she was likewise anxious to assure herself that she was in some place where sufficient protection be afforded in case the hideous Ethiopian should chance to track her footsteps thither. She advanced a step or two, and peeped into the inner room, where all was so still. She first caught sight of two white slaves of the male sex, and about the middle age, who, were sitting motionless as statues, at the foot of a sofa on which a third person was reclining.

At first Zuleika really doubted whether these persons were alive, or whether they were waxen effigies stationed in life-like possession there. But she was not many moments in uncertainty upon the point,—inasmuch as one of the slaves, catching a glimpse of her countenance, raised his finger to his lips, evidently to enjoin silence. There was however nothing discouraging nor repelling in the slave’s demeanour towards her: on the contrary, it was strictly respectful; and then he glanced towards the sofa, as much as to imply that the person reposing there must not be disturbed.

Zuleika ventured thereupon to peep a little farther into the room: for Ottoman ladies, however amiable and well-conducted, have their little feelings of curiosity as well as the daughters of Eve who belong to other climes. But she was almost shrinking back, and could with difficulty repress an ejaculation of dismay at beholding the individual who was stretched upon that sofa. He was apparently a man of about fifty years of age,—though

in reality, we may as well observe, he was not more than five and thirty; and nothing could exceed the frightful emancipation of his form nor the hideous ghastliness of his countenance. Though completely dressed in all his usual attire, his wretched leanness was most lamentably apparent; he was wasted to a shadow. One skeleton hand supported his head on the luxurious velvet cushion: the withered fleshless fingers of the other hand drooped over the side of the ottoman. Fleshless too seemed his face, as if there were naught but the skin hanging like loose parchment upon the bones. His eyes were closed: but Oh! so cavern-like and hollow were they; and the dark lashes and thickly pencilled brows added to the corpse-like ghastliness of the looks.

Such was the wretched being who thus met the view of Zuleika: and retreating towards the threshold which she had crossed, she made a sign for one of the slaves to come and speak to her. The menial who had previously signalled her to silence, now glanced again towards the couch; and doubtless perceiving that the cadaverous individual slept, he rose slowly in obedience to the young damsel's summons. She passed back into the adjacent room and the slave joined her there—gently and cautiously closing behind him the door of communication with the inner chamber.

"What can I do for you, young lady?" inquired the slaves in the most respectful manner.

"I am a niece of Daltaban Pasha," replied Zuleika. "His lordship, his family, and his friends, are in some gardens on the outskirts of this wood: circumstances separated me from them: I am anxious to get back—but dare not traverse the wood without an escort."

"Myself and brother slave will cheerfully accompany your ladyship presently, when our master awakes," responded the menial. "There are no other slaves at the kiosk."

"And how long, think you, will it be ere your master awakes?" inquired Zuleika anxiously.

"It may possibly be an hour—possibly two hours, my lady," responded the slave. "In the meantime I will place refreshments before your ladyship—"

"Two hours!" exclaimed the Kadiasker's daughter in affright. "My relatives and my friends will be overwhelmed with alarm at my prolonged absence. Surely your master is very ill?—and were I you, I should fear that he would never awaken from that slumber into which he has sunk."

"Oh, yes, my lady, he will awaken!" cried the slave. "Allah be praised! there's no doubt of it!"

"But what ails him?" asked the Kadiasker's daughter. "Does he rave in the delirium of fever? or is the unfortunate gentleman's brain turned?"

"Lady, have you not comprehended," asked the slave, in a low voice, "what my master is?"

"No," rejoined Zuleika, more bewildered than ever by the question.

"My lady," said the menial. "he is a Teryaki—in other words, an opium-eater."

Zuleika was at once surprised at herself for not having already conjectured this much: for though she had never before seen any of these wretched beings in the midst of their artificial enjoyment, yet she knew full well that they existed, and she had heard and read of them.

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed with a shudder, "is it possible that your master is thus perishing by a slow suicidal process?"

"He spends half his life, my lady, in a paradise of his own creation," responded the slave. "To indulge without restraint in his habit, he has settled himself in this complete seclusion—"

At that moment the hasty sounds of footsteps were heard approaching from somewhere outside the dwelling: and Zuleika glanced in terror from the lattice, with the dreadful apprehension of perceiving the hideous Ethiopian. But what a joyous revulsion of feeling took place in her heart, when she perceived that it was her handsome and well-beloved Khalil!

"Here is one of my friends!" she exclaimed in delight: and hastily opening her purse, she drew forth a piece of gold which she presented to the slave as an acknowledgment for his civility.

She then issued forth from the Teryaki's kiosk; and a cry of joy burst from the lips of Khalil as he beheld her. The next instant they strained each other in a fond embrace. Then, as leaning upon her lover's arm, the beautiful Zuleika accompanied him away from the vicinage of the kiosk, she narrated the particulars of the outrage which she had experienced at the hands of Kara Mesrour—how she had taken refuge in the picturesque little habitation from which she had just emerged.

Khalil drew his sabre to be on his guard against any sudden attack on the part of the vile Ethiopian, in case he should be still lurking amidst the shades of the wood: but there was no sign of his reappearance. The young Turk thus learnt from Zuleika's narrative that Mesrour had not perished in the waters of the Bosphorus; and as he conducted his beloved one through the grove, they conversed upon many things which were of interest to themselves: for Khalil had no

secrets from his charming and adored Zuleika.

The Pasha, his daughters, and the two Greeks, were unfeignedly rejoiced when they beheld Zuleika returning with Khalil; for Lucas and Julian had just come back, within a few minutes of each other, after an ineffectual search in different directions. But Ismilda again felt the viper of jealousy uncoiling itself and lifting up its head in her heart—though she dared not outwardly betray the feeling. Zuleika's tale had to be told over again; and nothing could exceed the Pasha's rage when he learnt that it was his own fugitive slave Mesrour who had committed such an outrage upon his niece. But Khalil, be it observed, carefully abstained from making any comment which might tend to show that he had a previous acquaintance with the hideous Ethiopian.

And now the whole party returned to the caique, and a homeward course was taken. For some time the conversation dwelt only on Zuleika's adventures,—until Lucas Vassilo happened to observe, "Truly, Lady Zuleika, methought at one time you had fallen in with some terrible bandit, as formidable as the Black Robber of the Balkan."

"I have heard of him," said Daltaban Pasha; "and if I mistake not, very many years have not elapsed since he suffered for his crimes. Some marvellous tales do they tell of that redoubtable chief—"

"But none more extraordinary," interjected Lucas, "than that which regarded a French traveller of distinction, and of which I remember to have read in some French book or newspaper."

"By the Prophet, Signor Vassilo!" ejaculated Daltaban Pasha: "this speech of yours gives promise of a story; and a



our young friend Khalil never recites a second narrative on the same occasion, we must now have recourse to you for the means of whiling away the time pleasantly during our voyage homeward."

"I shall be glad," said the elder Greek, "to contribute to your lordship's recreation; and he forthwith commenced the tale which will be found in the ensuing chapter."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### LUCAS VASSILO'S STORY.

IN the summer of 1803, a French gentleman, of the name of Alvimar, was travelling in European Turkey for his amusement. He was a man of about thirty years of age, of prepossessing exterior, and spoke the Turkish language with fluency. He was attended by a faithful valet a few years younger than himself; and he intended to prolong his stay for at least a couple of years in the east, his object being to visit the principal islands of the Levant, thence pass into Asia Minor, and afterwards repair to Alexandria, where he proposed to take ship for England.

On a fine evening in the month of August, the traveller and his valet arrived at the little village of Kœprilu, on the northern extremity of the range of mountains and defiles known to the ancients by the name of Hœmus, and to the moderns as the Balkan.

The two travellers entered the public room of the village inn, which was kept by an intelligent Bulgarian Christian, who had been a soldier in his younger days. A very tolerable supper was placed upon the table: and only one other guest besides Alvimar and his servant sat down

to partake of it. The domestic usually partook of his repasts in company with his master, simply for the reason that the country through which they were travelling did not boast of inns capable of offering separate apartments and meals.

The other guest alluded to was a Turk. He was a splendid specimen of a race remarkable for manly beauty. His countenance was swarthy but well formed; his eyes were dark and piercing; his teeth white and regular; his figure was indicative of strength, and yet graceful and symmetrical. He was dressed like a merchant or trader in a small way; but he was well armed with sword, pistols, and dagger.

After the meal the French gentleman fell into conversation with the Turk.

"You are travelling in a manner which shows that you have no suspicion of the inhabitants of this part of the country," said the Turk.

"I have heard of no reason for being suspicious," answered Alvimar. "I have been wandering for the last few weeks through Wallachia and Moldavia, and have never been either defrauded or molested by Christian or Mussalman. But, on your part, you travel well armed."

"I intend to cross the Balkan to-morrow," replied the Turk, laconically.

"And I purpose to pursue the same route," observed Alvimar.

"Did you not intend to take a guide and escort?" demanded the Turk.

"No. I understand that there is one good and beaten road which leads through the Defile of Derbenda; and as I moreover have an excellent map with me, I cannot well lose my way. As for the escort, I did not know there was any necessity for one."

The Turk remained silent for some moments, and then said, "I think that if you ask the landlord of this inn, he will tell you that within the last few years the defiles of the Balkan have become the refuge of a horde of banditti, under a chieftain who is called the Black Robber of the Balkan. Rumour says that the name of *Kara*, or 'the Black,' has been given to him on account of his deeds, and not in reference to his colour, and he is reported to be no darker in complexion than we Ottomans all are."

"And is this chieftain so very terrible?" inquired Alvimar.

"I only communicate to you the common report. God be praised, I have not yet encountered him nor his horde; and yet I traverse the Balkan at least once every six months, upon my trading associations. Moreover, I travel well armed, and have little about me to lose. I visit the towns on the other side of the Balkan to obtain orders for goods: and when I return to supply the articles required, I take an escort."

"These news are by no means agreeable," said Alvimar. "At the same time I thank you sincerely for your good intentions."

Alvimar wished the Turk good night, and retired to the room where he was to sleep. But on his way thither, he sought an opportunity of questioning the Bulgarian landlord upon the subject of the Turk's communication.

"All that he has told you is perfectly correct," replied the Bulgarian. "Indeed, I should have given you the same caution myself this evening. You had better take an escort. My three sons will see you safely across the Balkan."

"Agreed," said Alvimar. "Who is the traveller that supplied with us this evening?"

"He is a trader," answered the

landlord; "and he always stops at my house when he passes this way."

"Perhaps, as he intends to cross the Balkan to-morrow," observed Alvimar, "he should like to avail himself of the protection of the escort? Besides he is well armed and does not appear to be a man who would sell his life cheaply."

"I will communicate your wishes to him," said the Bulgarian; "and have no doubt that he will gladly comply with them."

The Frenchman then retired to rest.

On the following morning he rose early, and found the landlord's sons—three powerful and athletic young men, and well armed together, with the merchant, in readiness to depart. Alvimar and his servant were also supplied with defensive weapons; and in this manner they commenced their journey.

At first their way lay through scenes like those of a park: the sward, left to the free pasture of cattle, was dotted with groups of stately trees, and here and there darkened over with larger masses of wood.

At length the travellers entered a forest, through which their road which was to last for about four miles, when they would enter upon the Balkan. On either side the tall oaks closed in their ranks and stood gloomily lowering over them, as grim as an army of giants. The forest was passed, and the mountains of the Balkan commenced. The country was now a dry, arid, and devoid of fertility, as a short time back it had seemed lovely and attractive. The heights were in some places perfectly barren; in others, covered only with dry grass, or brittle furze. The road was broad and even, and wound amongst the valleys, thus remaining flat and easy.

At mid-day one of the landlord's son proposed that they should dismount from their horses, and indulge in a little refreshment and repose. This was agreed to; and the meat was spread upon the ground.

"Do you know which part of the Balkan is frequented by the Black Robber?" asked Alvimar of the merchant.

"It is impossible to say," was the reply; "he is here—there—and everywhere."

"I hope he is not *here*," said Alvimar, with a smile.

"And if he were?" cried the merchant, "do you suppose that we could resist him?"

"I most sincerely hope so," answered Alvimar somewhat troubled—he scarcely knew wherefore—by the question.

The merchant made no further observation, but rose from his seat, shouldered his gun, and glanced around him. Suddenly his eye rested upon an object at an immense distance.

"Do you see that gazelle?" he exclaimed; and ere any one gave him a reply, he raised the gun quick as thought to his shoulder.

The piece vomited forth a shower of flame and volume of smoke; and the gazelle dropped dead from the height on which it had been perched.

"That was an excellent shot" said the Frenchman, while the merchant coolly proceeded to reload his gun. "But was it prudent to awaken those echoes amongst the hills?"

The merchant's countenance assumed a haughty expression; and for the first time Alvimar surveyed him with suspicion and even distrust. The mind of the Frenchman suddenly became imbued with vague and indefinable fears; and he glanced anxiously from the merchant to the three

brothers, who were calmly smoking their pipes in silence.

At that moment a strange spectacle met his eyes, and filled him with alarm. The stunted shrubs around gave birth to numberless armed men: armed men appeared upon the heights: armed men started from the grove on the edge of which the party halted.

The three brothers leapt from the ground, seized their weapons, and prepared to stand upon their defence. Alvimar and his servant followed their example. But the merchant waved his hand with an authoritative and almost contemptuous smile, exclaiming at the same time, "As you value your lives, throw down your arms! These are the men who call the Black Robber their chief."

"And you, then, must be the Black Robber himself!" ejaculated the eldest of the three brothers; and at the same time he discharged his gun at the pretended merchant.

But quick as lightning, the bandit-captain had stepped aside, the instant, he saw the young man's intention; and the bullet whistled past his ear. In another instant Alvimar, his servant, and the three brothers were surrounded and disarmed.

The Black Robber made certain signals, in obedience to which the greater portion of his troop (which could not have amounted to less than two hundred and fifty men) sank down into their hiding places, an escort of twenty alone remaining to conduct the prisoners to the stronghold of the band. The prisoners were placed upon their horses, and ropes were fastened to their ankles beneath the animals' bellies. The procession then moved on, the Black Robber leading the way.

They entered a narrow lane leading amongst the defiles and fastnesses of the Balkan; and at

the expiration of an hour they reached a charming valley, irrigated by a limped stream, on the banks of which stood upwards of fifty or sixty tents of coarse canvas, the tops being covered with the skins of gazelles and wild animals. Over the largest and handsomest of these tents floated a black standard, thus indicating the pavilion of the robber chief. It was to this tent the cavalcade proceeded.

At short distances around the encampment, which was situate upon both sides of the river, a wooden bridge forming the means of communication between the two tented villages, sentinels were posted; and as the cavalcade passed, they presented arms to their captain. In a word the entire arrangements of the camp were formed upon the most perfect military procession.

The procession stopped at the entrance to the Black Robber's tent. Alvimar and his domestic were unbound and conducted into the pavilion; the three sons of the Bulgarian landlord were led away to another part of the encampment.

The Black Robber, with considerable politeness, desired Alvimar to be seated upon a handsome ottoman that formed a semi-circular sofa around one half of the pavilion. He then clapped his hands; the canvas at the side of the tent opposite the principal entrance was drawn aside; and a young female of transcendent beauty entered, bearing wine and sherbet in rich silver flagons upon a large salver of the same metal.

She was dressed in the Turkish costume, although her complexion was as fair as that of the loveliest maidens of the north. Milk and roses seemed to lend the hues to her transparent skin. Her eyes were dark blue: her hair was of a rich and shining brown—indeed,

almost a dark auburn; her figure was sylph-like and perfectly symmetrical. Her silk doliman was open at the breast, and a string of pearls around her neck seemed placed there to show that her bosom could vie in whiteness with those orient beads. Altogether she was a ravishing creature: and Alvimar for a few moments forgot the danger of his situation, in the pleasure of gazing upon so charming a specimen of female beauty, elegance and grace.

With a modest demeanour and downcast eyes, Zobeida (such was the name by which the Black Robber, who spoke to her with a kindness almost paternal, called her) presented refreshments to Alvimar and the chieftain. The French traveller partook of some sherbet, merely to prolong the gratification of beholding that lovely girl, whose age did not appear to exceed seventeen or eighteen; and when she at length retired, it seemed as if the sun had suddenly withdrawn its light.

"Christian," said the Black Robber, when Zobeida had retired, "your safety depends upon yourself. You are no doubt wealthy—all travellers from the Far West have ample revenues. My experience has acquainted me with this fact. I require two thousand piastres for your ransom? Can you procure that sum?"

"I have four hundred piastres about my person, and I can obtain the remainder from a French agent at Adrianople, who will honour a circular letter of a Paris banker which I have in my pocket."

"Can you procure the sum required by means of a messenger?" demanded the chief.

"The only way in which I could procure the amount, would be through my servant who must pass himself off as myself, and sign my name on the receipt."

"God be praised!" exclaimed the Black Robber, "In a few days you may be free; but attend well to what I am going to say to you. A follower of mine own must accompany your servant, both to lead him through the depths of the Balkan on his way to Adrianople, and to conduct him back again to this encampment. Beware of any treacherous designs towards me. Should the Pasha of Roumelia come with a vast army to attack my brave men, he and all his hosts would find their death in the wilds of the Balkan. No precaution has been lost sight of to ensure our safety. The defiles approaching this valley are full of deep pits and mines, carefully covered over. Into the former the invaders would be precipitated—numbers falling at every step to the bottom of wells filled with water. The mines would explode beneath the march of the others. Moreover the heights are armed with cannon; and thus my little band of three hundred braved fellows would be enabled to annihilate an army of ten thousand in the defiles. You see that any attempts at treachery would only cost you your life."

"I pledge you my honour," said Alvimar,—"and that pledge is more influential with me than any intimidation on your part,—that I will perform my part of the bargain, if you will fulfil yours."

"And what do you require of me?" demanded the Black Robber.

"The release of myself and servant, upon the payment of the ransom which you require; and the restoration of the three brothers, who formed my escort, to their father."

"The latter condition is impossible," said the Robber. "My object in acquainting you last night with the existence of a

bandit and his troop in the defiles, was to induce you to obtain an escort. I foresaw that the brothers would accompany you. I was resolved to get them into my power. They alone of all the young men of the villages in the neighbourhood of the Balkan, are acquainted with the secret paths and fastnesses of the old range of mountains. They have two alternatives to choose between:—death, or join my band."

"You cannot be so base——"

"Silence! I am not a man to hesitate what course to pursue. I am resolved. Think only of yourself and follower."

"And if I were to offer a ransom for the three brothers?" said Alvimar.

"I should refuse it. No more of this. Again I say, look only to the safety of yourself and your domestic," added the chief,

Alvimar saw how vain it was to combat the will of the terrible man in whose power he found himself; he accordingly, intimated his readiness to despatch his valet without delay to Adrianople.

"Does your servant comprehend the Turkish tongue?" demanded the Black Robber.

Alvimar replied in the negative.

The captain again, summoned Zobeida to the pavilion, and said "Girl, listen well to the instructions which this Christian will give his servant in your presence."

Alvimar—conquering the surprise which he experienced at this intimation of Zobeida's knowledge of the French tongue—proceeded to direct his servant how to act at Adrianople. He then gave him the necessary document, upon which the money was to be obtained; and the Black robber dismissed the valet, in company with one of his own followers, upon the journey to Adrianople. Two fleet and powerful horses

were provided for them: and the servant set out with confidence—for he was reassured by the hope of speedily returning and seeing his beloved master restored to freedom once again.

During the absence of the domestic, Alvimar was treated with all possible consideration by the Black Robber. The lovely Zobeida waited upon him at his meals, which he and the captain invariably took together. Alvimar was, however, at a loss to understand in what degree of relationship Zobeida stood with regard to the Black Robber. This terrible chieftain's harem—consisting, it was reported, of several lovely women—was lodged in two tents adjoining his own: but Zobeida dwelt alone with an elderly female, in a small pavilion apart. Zobeida evidently looked upon the chief with the utmost respect: and he, on his part, treated her with a kindness of a paternal nature.

Sometimes Alvimar addressed a few words upon common topics to the lovely maiden, whom he never saw save when the chief was present; and her replies were always courteous, and expressive of an amiability of disposition, although laconic. Altogether there was a mystery around that charming creature which he vainly endeavoured to penetrate.

In due time the valet and his guide returned from Adrianople with the money which he had procured upon the circular letter; and, the ransom being paid to the Black Robber, Alvimar and his follower were told that they were free. The Frenchman would gladly have taken leave of Zobeida; but when he dropped a hint to this effect; the Black Robber made no reply and Alvimar then questioned him upon a point in which he felt a deep interest.

This was the fate of the three brothers.

"They have preferred the alternative of joining my corps," answered the captain.

"May I be allowed to see them, and remunerate them for their good intentions in accepting the service of escorting me through these defiles?" demanded Alvimar.

"I comprehend you," said the Black Robber. "You wish to assure yourself that they are alive. Behold them."

He led Alvimar to the door of the tent; and the Englishman was unfeignedly delighted to perceive the three brothers lounging listlessly upon the grass at a little distance, smoking their long chibouques.

"Are you satisfied?" said the captain. "It does not suit my purpose that you should speak with them."

"I am satisfied," observed Alvimar.

"You are now at liberty to depart," continued the Black Robber. "You told me when first you came into this encampment, that your word of honour was the principal influence that you would allow to sway your actions. I believe you; and I require you to pledge yourself that you never reveal to a living soul the adventure which has happened to you in the Balkan;—for know, Christian that you and your domestic are the only prisoners who ever came into this valley and left it alive, since it has owned the sway of the Black Robber. There was something in your countenance that please me when I first met you at the village inn: a superior influence for which I can scarcely account, has alone induced me to spare your life. If, however, at any future time, you hear of my death and the dispersion of my gallant band by an unforeseen

event, you may consider yourself released from your vow of secrecy. Do you swear?"

"I swear that I will never so much as aught to betray you or yours until I am released from this pledge in the manner you describe," said Alvimar.

"I believe you," said the captain, emphatically. "Farewell. Your horses are ready; and one of my followers will conduct you to the southern extremity of the mountains of the Balkan."

And the two Frenchmen took their leave of the Black Robber, not a little astonished at the under current of generosity and chivalry which appeared in his character.

My narrative must now take a sudden leap in respect to dates. Seven years passed away; and it was now the summer of 1810.

Over the plains of Bulgaria proceeded a cavalcade of about twenty persons, mounted on horses. Upon one of the animals sat a gentleman dressed in the European style; and on another was his domestic, also a citizen of Western Europe, but attired in an oriental garb. The other members of the cavalcade were government messengers, merchants and traders.

"Our wanderings, my faithful follower," said Alvimar—for he was the Frenchman in his national garb—to his valet "have been prolonged to a far greater extent than I at first anticipated. But now we shall soon leave the dominions of Turkey, and in a few days shall enter the Hungarian territory."

"You did not expect, sir, that the little dissension which induced you to leave your paternal dwelling, would have so long expatriated you. Now the death of your father, and your accession to the wealth of the family, demand your return to France."

"It is as you say," exclaimed

Alvimar. "But yonder are the mountains of the Balkan, amongst whose defiles we encountered so strange an adventure seven years ago."

"At the death of the Black Robber, and the dispersion of his band of which we were informed at Adrianople, release you from the vow pledged upon that occasion."

"True!" cried the Frenchman. "The circumstance had slipped my memory. But there is one thing connected with this adventure, which I can never forget: I would give much—Oh! very much to discover the fate of that lovely creature whose presence embellished the gloomy dwellings of the Black Robber—the beautiful Zobeida."

"What, if we were to pass through the valley where the robbers' encampment stood, ere the three brothers escaped and led the army of the Pasha of Roumelia through the defiles, to capture the whole horde?"

"A good thought," cried Alvimar, and he immediately gave the necessary instructions to the guide of the caravan.

It was about five o'clock in the evening when the travellers merged from the defile of Novarbenda upon the heights that surrounded the beautiful valley. Suddenly a strange and ghastly spectacle met their eyes. Two lofty poles rose in the air; and, impaled upon their sharp steel points, were the remains of two human beings. The sight was horrible—horrible!

The procession paused for a moment, as if by some fearful instinct of general awe.

"Those are the remains of Kara Ali, the Black Robber, and Komi-man, his lieutenant," exclaimed the guide. "I saw them impaled five years ago."

"Were they not executed on the

same day that the Beglerbeg of Roumelia stormed their fastnesses?" demanded Alvimar.

"They were," answered the guide. "I accompanied the expedition in the service of his Highness the Beglerbeg Pasha; and I can safely declare that never did men meet their death more gallantly than those two. Their followers threw down their arms, and were punished by transportation into Anatolia."

"Did you hear any tidings of a young female, named Zobeida, who was attached to the household of the Black Robber?" inquired Alvimar, awaiting the guide's reply with much anxiety.

"I did," said the guide. "Her story was a romantic one; the Black Robber related it a few moments before he suffered, and recommended the young lady to the care of the Pasha."

"And what was that story?" demanded Alvimar, impatiently.

"It appeared that previous to the occupation of the Balkan by the Black Robber, he had commanded a small band of depredators in Anatolia. Fifteen or sixteen years ago the Black Robber and his horde attacked a caravan journeying through Anatolia, and obtained an immense plunder. Amongst the travellers slain upon that occasion, was a French consul, who with his young daughter and a female attendant (also a French woman,) was proceeding to a new post, to which he had recently been appointed. Ere he breathed his last he implored the robber to spare his child; and it appears that this prayer was complied with. The attendant was retained to take care of the child, upon whom the Black Robber bestowed the name of Zobeida. He treated her kindly, as Zobeida herself confessed after his death; for she wept bitterly when she

heard that he had been executed. She seemed to regard him as her father."

"And what became of her?" inquired Alvimar, deeply interested in this narrative.

"The Pasha sent her and her attendant to the French consul at Belgrade. That is all I know of the matter."

"We will stop a day or two, at Belgrade," whispered Alvimar to his valet.

That night they slept at the little village inn kept by the old Bulgarian soldier; and Alvimar had an opportunity of the old man for the captivity they had endured (though having undertaken to escort him amidst the defiles of the Balkan) in the valley of the Black Robber.

A few more words will complete my tale. Towards the close of the year 1810, M. Alvimar returned to the mansion of his ancestors upon the French soil. But he arrived not alone at that splendid dwelling. A lovely woman of four or five-and-twenty accompanied him as his bride. Need I tell you the name of Madame Alvimar was Zobeida.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE RUSSIAN FRIGATE.

Lucas Vassilo received suitable compliments from his listeners for the tale which he had just related to them; and Daltaban Pasha pronounced it to be of a very interesting character, although it had lacked the pure historical element, which had characterized the legends recounted by Khalil.

"It would almost appear," observed the Pasha, "as if the French hero of that narrative had fallen in love with the beautiful damsel at first sight. This is a



theory, continued his lordship, sententiously, "in respect to which many arguments may be adduced on both sides."

"It seems to me, my lord," said Khalil, "that the theory of love at first sight is perfectly rational; and whatever is rational, may also be looked upon as natural. But let me be thoroughly understood. Beauty pleases the eye, and at once engenders a tender interest in the soul. Thus at the outset beauty has the power of making a favourable impression. But if he whose heart is thus impressed, finds in the course of half an hour's conversation that the beauty of the countenance is likewise a reflex of the beauty of the mind, the impression is confirmed and strengthened, and the heart becomes enamoured. This is love at first sight."

"No doubt," observed Daltaban Pasha, "there is the love of which you speak; and it may be a permanent one, from the simple reason that fate has brought together two hearts that can be happy when beating in unison. But on the other hand, I fear that in many cases an affection which is conceived so suddenly may evaporate as rapidly: it may display caprice and fickleness, and thus prove the source of sorrow and unhappiness to at least one if not to both individuals."

"I can perfectly understand," said Ismilda, glancing significantly at Khalil from behind the negligently arranged folds of her veil,—"I can perfectly understand that a young man of ardent imagination and of enthusiastic feelings, and who is more prone to yield to impulses than to act according to sentiments duly weighed and deliberated upon—I can perfectly understand, I say how much a young man may all in a moment conceive what he fancies to be an

affection for a young lady; but the next day, or even the next hour, he may behold another who in an instant displaces and supersedes the image of the former in his heart. Is not this so, Signor Khalil?"

The young Turk perceived that Ismilda, as she thus spoke, flung a somewhat malicious glance towards Zuleika; and Khalil comprehended what was passing in the mind of the Pasha's wife. She still continued to experience a feeling of jealousy on account of the sudden zeal which Khalil had shown in searching after Zuleika when she was missed from the garden which they had so recently left. And then too, Ismilda knew that they had been to some little time alone together after they had fallen in with each other at the kiosk of the opium-eater; and having herself no faith in the constancy or integrity of the human heart, she did not know to what extent Zuleika's dark eyes had made their impression on the soul of Khalil. In a word, she was annoyed at the incident: she was jealous—she hated Zuleika—she was half inclined to be angry with Khalil; and she now found partial vent for her evil feelings by seizing upon the opportunity to express her opinion on the subject of love at first sight, and to put this somewhat pointed question to the young Turk.

Khalil was at no loss to understand what was passing in Ismilda's mind: but with his wonted calmness of manner, he said, "There is not the slightest doubt of the truth of your ladyship's remark. But methinks we could all advance arguments which would apply to particular cases whereas it was on the broad ground that his lordship the Pasha began to reason on the subject."

"The interest I felt in Signor Vassilo's tale," said the Pasha, "set my mind floating on the current of a particular train of ideas. I had altogether forgotten something which ought indeed to be uppermost in my thoughts."

"And what is that, my dearest husband?" inquired Ismilda, bestowing a tender look as well as a carressing epithet on him against whose very life she entertained a murderous project.

"The conduct of that villanous slave, Kara Mesrour," answered the Pasha. "Immediately on our return to the villa, I will despatch a messenger to your father Zuleika, with the desire that he sent out hosts of his men to scour the country in search of that fugitive offender."

The reader must bear in mind that the caique had entered past the gardens that had been the scenes of Khalil's adventure with Mesrour, and past those grounds likewise where Zuleika subsequently experienced the outrage at the Ethiopian's hands. After the latter adventure, the caique, was turned round in order that a homeward direction might be taken: and thus the diverging stream was descended. The boat was now approaching the point where this stream joined the Bosphorus; but on either side the foliage was so thick, that little of the Bosphorus itself could be perceived as the caique floated down the narrower stream towards that ampler expanse of shining water. Thus it was not till the instant that the caique emerged from the streamlet, that the eyes of those seated therein encountered an object which was at least calculated to excite a sudden surprise, if not a feeling of alarm. This was a frigate advancing down the Bosphorus, as if coming from the Black Sea;

and the flag which it bore was that of Russia.

Here we must pause for a few moments to describe wherefore the appearance of the Russian vessel was calculated to excite those feelings. Turkey and Russia had for some time past been at war; but at the period of which we are writing a suspension of hostilities had been mutually agreed upon in order to enable diplomatic negotiations to make an endeavour to settle terms of peace. England had joined with Russia in this war against the Ottoman Empire: and it was at the instigation of England the truce had taken place to afford facilities for peace. Thus when Daltaban Pasha and his companions on emerging in the caique from the streamlet, beheld a Russian frigate floating majestically at a distance of scarcely half a mile, they were naturally seized with some degree of apprehension.

"This is extraordinary!" exclaimed Daltaban: for though there has certainly been no rupture of the truce, yet it is strange that a Russian vessel-of-war should penetrate from the Black Sea into the Turkish waters!"

"Strange indeed!" ejaculated Khalil, who had started up from his seat and was now fixing his eyes upon the Russian frigate.

"May it not be a mere friendly visit or pleasure-cruise on the part of that frigate?" inquired Lucas Vassilo. "Russia would scarcely violate the truce in this manner——"

"And if that frigate dare penetrate much farther with hostile intent," interrupted Daltaban, "it will speedily have one of our men-of-war sailing out of the Golden Horn to encounter it."

"Do you think there is any danger?" inquired Ismilda who was trembling with alarm.

Gulnare and Thyrsa were evidently smitten with the same feeling as they anxiously watched their father's countenance: but Zuleika kept her eyes furtively fixed upon the features of Khalil who was standing up in the caique and gazing at the Russian frigate.

"Ah, I comprehend it!" suddenly ejaculated Khalil, before Daltaban Pasha had time to answer his wife's query. "Yes—behold the white flag!—they are running it up to the mast-head. The object is a friendly one!"

"And what can that object be?" inquired Daltaban Pasha, whose ideas, being naturally somewhat sluggish, were very far from keeping pace with Khalil's readiness of conjecture.

"According to the terms of the truce there was to be an exchange of prisoners!" rejoined the young Turk; "and inasmuch as an Ottoman man-of-war went up a few days back towards Sebastopol with a number of Russians of distinction who had been captured in various engagements—this frigate is now doubtless bringing down an equal number of Ottoman prisoners to Constantinople."

Whether Khalil's conjecture were the right one or not, seemed to matter but little, inasmuch as that white flag which had just been run up to the mast-head of the Russian frigate, set at rest the apprehensions of those who were in the caique. There was scarcely any wind: and though the frigate had nearly all its canvas set, it made but a very slow progress. This circumstance perhaps added to the stateliness of its appearance, as it floated completely upright on the shining bosom of the Strait. Daltaban Pasha made a sign to his six stalwart black slaves to pull in the direction of the frigate in order that a nearer view might be obtained of that Muscovite man-of-war.

And now, as the caique drew nearer, those who were in it might have perceived that several telescopes were directed towards them from the deck of the frigate. The four ladies had again thrown back their veils in order that they might enjoy a more perfect view of the vessel; and it was no wonder that the telescopes when once pointed at them, should be kept turned towards the same focus; for assuredly so rare an assemblage of beauties had never before met the eyes of the Russian gazers. Half reclining with true oriental indolence upon the voluptuous cushions—beneath the fawning of green silk fringed with gold—Ismilda, Gulnare, Thyrsa and Zuleika were indeed the most favourable specimens of Turkish feminine loveliness that could be thus grouped together. The three younger ladies were really unconscious—and perhaps Ismilda likewise was—that they were thus exposing their countenance to the sweeping range of the eyes which were peering at them through the telescopes. Khalil and the two Greeks perceived however that those telescopes were thus turned towards the caique; but they did not like to breathe a hint upon the subject or even to make a sign to the ladies, for fear Daltaban Pasha on observing that the veils were thrown back should give way to his anger. Not many minutes however elapsed ere he himself was suddenly struck by the circumstance; and with a start he ejaculated. "Veil yourselves! veil yourselves this instant!—the eyes of these infidels are fixed upon you!"

Scarcely were the words uttered from the Pasha's tongue, when the four veils were drawn over those beautiful countenances; and then the telescopes were one by one withdrawn from the posi-

tions in which they had been held over the bulwarks of the frigate.

We must here inform the reader that Khalil's conjecture was perfectly accurate, and that the Russian frigate was bringing a number of distinguished Ottoman war prisoners to Constantinople in exchange for an equal number of Russian prisoners who had been sent up in a Turkish ship to Sebastopol. The captain of the Russian frigate was a young man of a high patrician family, and who had obtained the command of that vessel carrying thirty-six guns, as much through aristocratic interest as through any particular merits which he possessed. Nevertheless he was considered to be a dashing officer who only required opportunities to signalize himself: he was fond of reckless and daring adventures—and being thoroughly unscrupulous and unprincipled, was by no means particular how he gratified whatsoever whims and caprices he might take into his head. He entertained a cordial hatred for the Turks; and as he was capable of a mean and petty vindictiveness, he on the present occasion kept his prisoners confined between decks, although both courtesy and generosity ought to have induced him to allow them to remain on the quarter-deck, so that when the frigate entered the Bosphorus they might least their eyes with the view of their native land to which they were returning. From all that we have just said, the reader may form some little estimate of the character and disposition of Captain Kolokoff, Commander of the Russian Frigate "Ivan the Terrible."

Kolokoff was on the deck, discoursing with some of his officers, when Daltaban Pasha's caique emerged from the streamlet which has so often before been noticed.

No other Ottoman pleasure vessel was in sight; and now for the first time did Captain Kolokoff behold one of those beautifully painted, gorgeously gilt, and elegantly appointed Turkish barges of which he had at different times heard and read. Seizing a telescope, he hastened to direct it towards this new object of his interest and curiosity.

"There are six black rovers to that gingerbread boat," exclaimed Kolokoff: "and on my soul they pull their oars with a much regularity as our men-of-war's men could display! Ah, but now they seem uncertain how to shape their course! They are afraid of us! Ha! ha! the Russian flag fills them with alarm. But by St. Nicholas! there are ladies in the caique! I must have a nearer view of them. Run up the white flag—let us show them that our mission is a peaceful one!"

Kolokoff's orders were quickly obeyed; and the white banner, symbolical of truce, was hoisted up to the mast-head.

"Excellent!" he ejaculated; "the caique is now coming towards us. Ah! and by St. Nicholas! those beauties are unveiling their faces! Take your glasses, and feast your eyes upon their loveliness!"

"Can you see, sir, that they are really lovely from this distance?" asked the first lieutenant, half deferentially and half with smiling familiarity, as he took a telescope—an example which was followed by the rest of the officers who were grouped on the quarter-deck.

"In the first place," replied Captain Kolokoff, laughing, "the idea of beauty invariably associates itself with the merest mention of Turkish women; and in the second place no ladies who are accustomed to wear their veils would raise them now, under such

circumstances, unless they knew themselves to be beautiful."

"Perchance, sir," observed the lieutenant, "it is that they may with all the more ease survey the frigate; and at present they may be unaware that our telescopes are riveted upon them."

There was now a silence of some minutes,—during which the frigate and the caique drew nearer towards each other; and all the while the Russian officers continued to keep their regards fixed through the telescopes upon the ladies under the awning of the Pasha's barge.

"Now tell me, are they not beautiful?" at length exclaimed Kolokoff. "Did you ever behold such an assemblage of loveliness? I can see them as plain as if they were present upon the quarter-deck! Oh, such hair—such eyes—such forms!"

"Yes," responded the first lieutenant, "they are certainly beautiful. They would be houris were it not that one only of the four appears to have raven hair."

"And if I mistake not," said Kolokoff, "the paradise of the impostor Mohammed has none but black-eyed and dark-haired houris within its precincts. Ah, perdition! they have suddenly veiled themselves!" added the Russian captain, in a tone of mingled disappointment and rage.

"Yes," said the lieutenant, "they have suddenly veiled themselves; and it seems as if four bright and beautiful stars had gone out."

"I saw that stout old man with the grey beard," observed Captain Kolokoff, "abruptly turn round and make some remark or utter some command—"

"Doubtless a command for the ladies to veil themselves," observed the lieutenant. "We should have been more cautious and discreet in the way in which we

used our telescopes. That elderly man is evidently a Pasha. I beheld the orders glittering on the breast of his buttoned-up frock coat. But as for the ladies, captain, you will see their faces no more."

"See their faces no more?" exclaimed Kolokoff. "Do you know that the very words you have just uttered have struck me as a suggestion? I feel full of adventurous spirit—"

"May I venture deferentially to remind you, sir," interrupted the first lieutenant, who was of a more cautious disposition than his commander, "that we have a flag of truce floating at our masthead?"

"A symbol which muzzles our cannon" interjected Kolokoff, "but which does not prevent us from indulging in a little recreation at the expense of that stout old Pasha and his bevy of fair ladies."

"What would you do, sir?" asked the first lieutenant: and then, without waiting for a reply, he immediately added, "I respectfully beseech you to bear in mind that no greater offence can be given to a Turk than to offer an insult to the ladies of his harem."

"Insult!" ejaculated Kolokoff, haughtily. "Methinks that a Russian officer would confer an honour upon such an infidel dog by condescending to notice him; and as for the ladies of his harem, believe me that they will infinitely prefer an hour's gay coat with all three or four of us than the gloomy restraintful company of their old Pasha."

"Did you not observe, sir," asked the first lieutenant, "that there are three young men in that caique?—and the glance which I bestowed upon them through my telescope gave me no unfavourable idea of their looks?"

"Let us see!" exclaimed Kolokoff; and he again turned his spy glass upon the caique, which was now at a distance of barely three hundred yards. "Yes—there are three young men: one appears to be a Moslem—the other two must be Greeks—"

"Evidently so, by their apparel," responded the first lieutenant: and as he felt most anxious to prevent his superior officer from committing any folly or rushing precipitately into any perilous adventure, he added, "You see therefore, captain, that though the Pasha be elderly and grey,—yet that those young and beautiful ladies are enjoying the companionship of three individuals whose society is doubtless most agreeable."

"And it is precisely because those beautiful ladies are compelled to put up with the society of that young Moslem infidel and those two Greek barbarians," exclaimed Kolokoff,—"it is for this very reason that I ought to go and make myself agreeable to them. I will lay you a heavy wager that I succeed in inducing that old Pasha, his ladies, and the young men to come on board our ship and accept a collation; and then you shall see how successfully we will cut out that Turk and those Greeks."

"It is impossible, Captain Kolokoff," said the first lieutenant, very gravely, "that you can be in earnest."

"I never was more serious, responded the Russian commander; "and as a proof you may back sails, drop anchor here and let my barge be lowered at once."

With the habitual deference of an inferior towards a superior, the lieutenant was about to turn away to execute the orders which he had just received,—when his sense of prudence prevailed over

his accustomed docility; and he said "Captain Kolokoff, you know that I am your friend—you will permit me to offer a remonstrance."

"Speak quick!" ejaculated the Russian commander; I am in haste to repair to those beauties."

"You know, sir," continued the lieutenant, "that there is a truce between the two countries—that a great amount of exasperation prevails on both sides—and that the slightest circumstance may fan the flame of warfare anew. You know likewise, sir, that the Admiral at Sebastopol gave you specific instructions—"

"To show as much civility as my nature will permit to these Turkish barbarians of prisoners," ejaculated Kolokoff, impatiently. "But what earthly harm can there be in inviting those beautiful ladies to visit the ship and to partake of refreshments? Really it is a mere act of civility—But enough!" exclaimed Captain Kolokoff, thus suddenly interrupting himself, as if he thought that he had already argued the point sufficiently with his subordinate. "Let my barge be lowered, and let the ship anchor here,"

The first lieutenant dared not utter another syllable of remonstrance; and he proceeded to issue orders in compliance with the instructions he had just received from the impetuous, headstrong Kolokoff. The boat was lowered: half-a-dozen fine looking Russian sailors quickly betook themselves to their oars: and Kolokoff descended into the barge. We should observe that he himself had this side, and every one of the sailors was armed with a cutlass—as is usual on board the Russian ships during the time of war; for this was a mere interval of truce or suspended hostilities, and not of actual peace. Therefore the "Ivan the

Terrible" and all its crew were entirely on the war footing.

As the barge shot away from the ship's side, the crew of the frigate itself hastily began to furl the sails; and the anchor was let drop. Daltaban Pasha's caique, having approached near enough to afford those in it a full view of the frigate, had just begun to sweep round so as to take a homeward direction,—when the barge was lowered, as just described.

"Someone is putting off from the frigate," said Daltaban Pasha. I wonder for what purpose it can be?"

"One would think," observed Julian Meleda, "that being now so near to Constantinople the frigate would make the best of its way to reach its destination.

"But so far from proceeding," exclaimed Khalil, "It is about to anchor. The barge shoots away from the ship's side—It surely cannot be bearing down upon us?"

These last words were uttered in a musing tone to himself: for Khalil did not choose to excite any premature misgiving on the part of the ladies—although he had a suspicion that the putting-off of that boat from the frigate had in view some object not altogether disconnected with the caique.

"It appears to be making straight towards us," said Lucas Vassilo, also watching the boat.

"Is there any danger?" asked Ismilda, again trembling with alarm.

"There floats the white flag," responded Daltaban Pasha; "and I should scarcely think that the Russian captain would violate its sanctity—though I place little reliance on Russian honour, integrity or good faith at any time. Indeed, it is, to say the least of it, singular that the ship should have anchored just there, and the boat should have put off immediately after those telescopes were all con-

centrating their range in the one focus of this caique."

"There is nothing to fear, ladies," said Khalil, glancing towards the group beneath the awning immediately after his keen vision had enabled him to discern how many persons were in the barge. "There are seven of them—six at the oars, and an officer sitting in the stern-sheets. We are ten."

"The ten thus alluded to consisted of the six black slaves, the Pasha, the two Greeks and Khalil's self."

"Yes—but you forget," said Daltaban, "that these six slaves are all unarmed."

"True!" interjected Khalil. "But we four——"

"Yes—we four are armed" added Daltaban, laying his hand upon the jewelled hilt of his sabre; "and if those Russian barbarians should dare mean us mischief, we will speedily convince them that we know how to wield the weapons with which we are provided."

"The boat is certainly shooting into the same course which we are taking," said Khalil, as he continued to watch the progress of the frigate's barge.

"It may be," said Daltaban "that they require information—that they want a pilot—that they are afraid to proceed any further along the Bosphorus—"

"No, my lord," interrupted Khalil, in a whisper— for he was still desirous to avoid alarming the ladies prematurely, or as it might after all prove, unnecessarily.—"if those Russians needed any information relative to the navigation of the Bosphorus, there is sure to be at least one amongst our fellow countrymen on board who could give such information—always supposing our conjecture to be right that the frigate has come with exchanged prisoners."

"I know there is some danger!" said Ismilda, now issuing forth from beneath the awning, and hanging to her husband's arm. "Tell me, my dear lord," she asked, with a very pale countenance and with a glistening anxiety in the eyes,—"tell me what you think?"

"By the Prophet, Ismilda!" exclaimed Daltaban, "I am as much bewildered as yourself—though perhaps not quite so much afraid, charming rose of my soul!" and he caressed her encouragingly. "The truth is, Ismilda, I see not what these Russians can want with us—yet their proceeding is suspicious—"

"Let the slaves ply their oars more quickly!" exclaimed Ismilda, in a tone of entreaty; "or why not run in for the shore and land us at the first spot we reach?"

"That Russian boat gains upon us preceptibly," answered the Pasha; "it must inevitably overtake us—and it might cut us out if we thought of running to the land. Besides Ismilda," added Daltaban, with all a brave soldier's scornful remonstrance, "would you have us fly ignominiously from a handful of Russians who after all may possibly mean us no harm? Sit down, pretty one. I feel as if my right arm had lost its energy when one of you womankind is clinging to it."

Ismilda returned to her seat under the awning, but she was full of trepidation. That little interval of discourse between the Pasha and his wife had afforded Khalil an opportunity of darting a quick glance of mingled love and encouragement upon Zuleika; while Lucas Vassilo had hastened to breathe a few words in the ear of Gulnare—and Julian Meleda had done the same by Thyrsa.

Meanwhile the Russian barge was rapidly overtaking the caique; for Daltaban Pasha's pride as well

as natural courage would not permit him to order the black slaves to ply their oars more rapidly. Indeed, as he himself had already explained to Ismilda, it was perfectly useless—even if he wished it—to try and distance the Russian boat,—supposing that the latter was really bent upon bearing down upon the former. Nearer and nearer came the barge: and at length Khalil, suddenly turning to the Pasha, said, "My lord, whatever their object may be—whether hostile or peaceful—let us lie upon our oars and wait for them."

"Truly, it will be more courteous in the one sense, and more dignified in another," responded the Pasha: and he made a sign to his slaves accordingly.

The six blacks rested upon their oars; and in a few minutes the Russian barge came up parallel with the caique: that is to say, with only the two oars' lengths between them. Captain Kolokoff, standing up in the stern sheets, made a polite bow—which was no doubt intended for the veiled ladies under the awning of green silk fringed with gold. They only inclined their heads very gently: while Daltaban Pasha, taking the bow as being intended for himself, acknowledged it in soldier like fashion by carrying his right hand up to the front of his fez.

"Am I addressing myself to any one who can speak the Russian language?" asked Captain Kolokoff, assuming a most courteous look as well as a very bland tone; for after the boast he had made to his first lieutenant, he considered it a point of honour to induce the Pasha and his companions, male and female, to go on board the "Ivan the Terrible."

There was no answer given to his question—for the very excellent reason that not a single soul



in the caique was acquaint with the Russian tongue.

"Am I addressing myself to anyone who can respond to me in this language?" was the next demand put by the Russian captain: and now he spoke in French.

Khalil waited an instant while he glanced at Daltaban Pasha: but his lordship shook his head and stroked his beard, saying, 'Verily, the wretch is a barbarian!—he cannot speak the only language which is spoken in the Prophet's paradise.'

"I can answer you in the French tongue," exclaimed Khalil.

"And I comprehend it," whispered Zuleika to her cousins Gulnare and Thyrsa; for the Kadiasker's daughter had been well educated and was highly accomplished.

"Permit me to announce myself," said the Russian officer," as Captain Kolokoff, commander of the Frigate "Ivan the Terrible," which behold yonder! Might I solicit a similarly courteous explanation on your part?"

"Certainly," rejoined Khalil. "This caique belongs to his Excellency Daltaban Pasha, whom you behold here present. These ladies are of his family; my two Greek companions and myself enjoy the honour of being his lordship's friends and guests.

"Perdition!" muttered Kolokoff to himself: "I would that the fair ones unveiled themselves:"—but so well were those veils folded that not a glimpse could he now obtain of their countenances. "Signor," he continued, speaking aloud to Khalil, "you are doubtless aware that there is a truce between the two nations——"

"You have recognised it, sir," answered Khalil, "by means of the banner which hangs at your mast-head. May I inquire, if you have brought a freight of

Ottoman prisoners-of-war who are to be restored to liberty?"

"Your surmise is correct," responded Kolokoff. "But, as I was about to observe, there is a suspension of hostilities inasmuch as peace may be the result, methought that in order to cement good feelings between us, your Pasha and your ladies, together with yourself and your Greek friends would not object to favour my vessel with your presence—in which case I would show you all possible hospitalities."

"Your offer is most courteous," rejoined Khalil; "but I can at once take it upon myself to answer for his lordship the Pasha, without previously consulting him, that he is in haste to return to his villa; and with all becoming thankfulness, he is unable to avail himself of your invitation."

The Russian captain bit his lip for an instant; and over his countenance there flitted an expression which, striking Khalil as peculiar, tended to confirm in his mind the misgivings he had already experienced with regard to Kolokoff's sincerity. The young Turk, though possessing a most frank and ingenuous demeanour, was nevertheless endowed with a rare amount of penetration. He had felt convinced that the Russian Captain's courtesy was only a hypocritical artifice to conceal some sinister intention. He had seen too that the instant the barge had come up parallel with the caique, Kolokoff had swept his eyes somewhat scrutinizingly over the persons of the six black slaves; and the young Turk was irresistibly struck by the conviction that this was to see whether or not they were armed. Then, too, there was the fact that all the Russian sailors themselves were armed with cutlasses. In addition to all these circumstances Khalil has

noticed that the Russian officer muttered something to himself;—it was about the veils—but what it thus was Khalil of course remained ignorant. It was all these facts which had at once decided Khalil to refuse the invitation even without consulting the Pasha upon the point. And now—when he beheld Kolokoff bite his lips and when he observed that peculiar expression flit over countenance—Khalil was more than ever convinced that the Russian captain had some sinister object; and he was all the more satisfied with himself for having given that refusal of his own responsibility.

"There is but little courtesy," said Kolokoff, after a brief pause, "in the decision to which you have so quickly come. I will thank you, signor," he added, with a dignified hauteur, "to interrupt my invitation to his Excellency the Pasha."

"I cannot have the slightest objection," responded Khalil, with a calmness so well bred and a self-possession so gentlemanly, that again did Kolokoff bite his lip, as if feeling his inferiority in the presence of that young man of such rare personal beauty and of noble masculine dignity.

Khalil turned towards Daltaban and explained all that had taken place between himself and the Russian captain—simply adding that he had his own good reasons for taking it upon himself to decline the invitation. Meanwhile Zuleika had in a few whispering words given a similar interpretation to her cousins and Ismilda—who all three wondered why Khalil should have rejected the invitation: but Zuleika in her own mind felt perfectly well convinced that her lover could have none other but the most excellent motives for the line of conduct he had pursued. As for Daltaban

Pasha,—be it recollected that he had the highest confidence in Khalil—he experienced moreover certain vague but important suspicions in respect to our hero on account of the talismanic ring; and thus he unhesitatingly assented to the course Khalil had adopted in respect to the refusal of Kolokoff's invitation.

"His lordship the Pasha," said the young Turk, turning again towards Kolokoff, "desires me to express his thanks for your courtesy—together with his regret at being unable to avail himself of it."

Captain Kolokoff made a vehement gesture of impatience; and with an expression of rage flitting over his countenance, he exclaimed, "Never did I experience conduct so churlish in my life! My proposal was a friendly one—and it is rejected with rudeness!"

"Not so," answered Khalil in a dignified manner. "The courtesy of your proposal—if courtesy were really intended by it—has been duly acknowledged, and more we cannot do. As for the remaining part of the question we in Turkey reserve it to ourselves as a right to decline invitations, if it be not agreeable or convenient to accept them."

Your manners in Turkey appear to be, altogether uncouth," exclaimed Kolokoff. "There are your four ladies so closely veiled as if they were so many mummies!"

"Enough of this insolence!" ejaculated Khalil; then turning towards the Pasha, he said, "My lord, be so kind as to command your slaves to ply their oars."

Daltaban Pasha made the signal: the six black bent to their oars; and the caique glided away from the vicinage of the Russian barge. Kolokoff could now no longer restrain his rage; he vociferated forth the command

for his own men to ply their oars vigorously; and then he added in a lower and still more rapid tone. "We are not to be thus bearded and insulted! We will board that painted boat!—we will make those fair ladies our prisoners—and we will carry them off in triumph to our ship, though all the Turkish navy come forth from the Golden Horn to oppose us!"

The looks of the Russian sailors showed that they were fully prepared to follow their commander's instructions, and to back him in his headstrong adventure. Khalil in the meanwhile had hastily explained to the Pasha and the two Greeks all that had just taken place between himself and Kolokoff: while Zuleika conveyed similar intelligence to her cousins and to Ismilda.

It became evident that the Russians were bent upon mischief. Ismilda was about to give way to the wildness of her terror—when Daltaban Pasha hastily said, "Calm yourself—or at least gather up all your fortitude. Let us show these Muscovite barbarians that we know how to scorn as well as to avenge the insults they would fain put upon us."

"Yes," quickly added Khalil; "our duty is clear, and we will perform it. Fear not ladies! You have defenders who will die sooner than suffer a hair of your heads to be injured!"

We have already said that the Russian boat glided more swiftly than the caique over the water; and it was therefore useless for those in the Turkish pleasure-vessel to think of escaping from the barge, even if the Pasha and his three brave coadjutors entertained such an idea. Daltaban therefore commanded the slaves to take in their oars; and then Khalil said to him, "If your Ex-

cellency would use the slaves as a guard to protect the ladies under the awning, the Greeks and I will take our position at the bow of the caique; and thus, on whichever point the Russians assail us, we shall be prepared for the conflict."

The Pasha, who was marvellously quick in all matters pertaining to warfare, ordered the slaves to break up two or three of the oars, so that they might all arm themselves with stout cudgels as a means of defence. His Excellency's command was no sooner issued than it was obeyed; and as the caique now floated lazily and at will upon the water, the six blacks were marshalled by the Pasha in the immediate vicinage of the awning beneath which the ladies were seated. To these fair ones did he speak quick words of encouragement: but it was chiefly Ismilda who required them—for Gulnare, Thyza and Zuleika were full of confidence in their lovers. Khalil, in the meantime, had beckoned the two Greeks to follow him towards the head of the caique; and there, with their drawn weapons, they watched the movements of the Russian barge.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE CONFLICT

All those arrangements for the defence of the caique which we have just described, were but the work of a few minutes; and they were not lost upon Kolokoff, who watched them with a keen eye. Perhaps for an instant he repented of his rashness in thus daring an adventure, and provoking an encounter which might become serious not only in its present but also in its future consequences: he had, however, gone

too far to retreat. He had vowed to his first lieutenant that he would have the ladies on board the "Ivan the Terrible," and not for an instant could he endure the thought of returning to his ship and confessing that he was baffled. He had, moreover, assumed so haughty a demeanour towards Khalil that his pride would not permit him to sheer off as if in alarm; and he had also compromised himself with his men to a degree which compelled him to persevere in the adventure at all risks and perils.

The scene presented by that part of the Bosphorus, was now a most interesting one. At a distance of less than half a mile lay the Russian frigate at anchor, the sailors busily engaged in furling the sails—the officers standing on the quarter-deck, gazing with mingled curiosity and suspense upon their captain's barge and the Turkish caique; for the first lieutenant had told his comrades what mad-headed design it was that Kolokoff had taken into his head.

The caique itself, as we have already said, was floating at will upon the sunlit bosom of the Bosphorus: six black slaves, armed with the fragments of the oars, were drawn up near the awning; while Daltaban Pasha, with his naked sabre in his hand stood upon a seat intently watching the movements of the Russian barge. At the head of the caique stood Khalil, Lucas, and Julian—likewise with their drawn weapons in their hands—their eyes fixed upon the barge—their countenance animated with a calm yet chivalrous fortitude. The barge had shot away to some little distance from the caique, in order that Kolokoff might regulate his plan of attack according to circumstances: for he saw that it was no child's play in which he was about to engage.

He had not as yet drawn his own weapon; nor had any of his men quitted their oars. His eyes were keenly fixed upon the caique; and for a few minutes he was undetermined whether to run in towards the stern and encounter the black slaves with the Pasha—or whether it were better to make the barge sweep round and attack the bow of the Turkish pleasure-vessel. At length his mind was made up: he thought that it would be more consistent with the character of a dashing exploit to assail in the first instance those who were well armed, and it would likewise be more prudent to capture the three young men first and then rush to the encounter of the Pasha and his slaves.

A few hasty words of command were given by Kolokoff to the sailors: his hand guided the helm—the sweeping strokes of their oars sent the boat gliding over the water—and then all in a moment abandoning the tiller, Kolokoff drew his sword. The oars were instantaneously taken in: forward he sprang towards the front part of his boat; and two of his seamen were the next moment at his back, with their drawn cutlasses in their hands.

"Three to three!" exclaimed Kolokoff to Khalil, speaking in the French language.

At the same instant the barge ran under the bow of the caique. With his left hand tossing a grapnel into the Pasha's pleasure-vessel—Kolokoff, with his drawn weapon in his right hand, warded off a blow which Khalil dealt at him. The combat then commenced at the bows of the two boats, as they were thus lashed together—Kolokoff and two of his men on the one side—Khalil, Lucas and Julian on the other. Their weapons clashed, and at the same moment a faint scream

burst from Ismilda's lips; but her husband threw a quick glance upon her, exclaiming somewhat sternly, "I command you to be still! Let not these Muscovite barbarians have reason to suppose that they are feared by any one on board my *caïque*!"

Daltaban, having thus spoken, turned his eyes towards the scene of the fray,—holding himself prepared to rush forwards to bear a part in it in case of superior numbers being opposed to Khalil and the two Greeks. Nor did his Excellency have to wait many moments before he found himself called upon to join in the conflict: for Khalil's sabre inflicted a severe wound on Kolokoff's left arm—and the sight of their commander's blood at once inspired with rage the four Russian sailors who had hitherto abstained from taking part in the fray. With a terrific yell they all four drew their cutlasses and sprang forward to the head of a barge.

The instant that Khalil perceived the movement that was about to take place, he sprang from the *caïque* into the barge, dealing a terrific blow at Kolokoff, who reeled, staggered, and fell back. But he instantaneously recovered himself—and the combat was renewed with Khalil. Lucas and Julian lost not a moment in following the gallant young Turk, whom with one accord they had looked upon as their leader; and Daltaban Pasha was speedily in their footsteps. The conflict raged desperately for some minutes in the barge—until Captain Kolokoff, being disarmed by Khalil, was hurled down; and the next instant he was writhing with rage beneath the young Turk's foot. Two of the Russian sailors were slain by Lucas and Julian—a third was struck down and dangerously wounded by Daltaban Pasha; and now the black

slaves came pouring into the barge. The three remaining Russian seamen were quickly overpowered; and thus the victory on the side of the *caïque* was complete. We may add that beyond a trifling scratch or two the Pasha and his three young friends were unhurt.

The surviving Russian sailors were disarmed and held in custody by the slaves. Khalil, lifting his foot from Kolokoff's chest, bade him rise. This command the Russian captain obeyed with some difficulty; for he was wounded in two places, and severely bruised. It would be impossible to describe the mingled rage and mortification which his countenance exhibited—impotent passion conflicting with a sense of the completest humiliation. He spoke not a word—but swept his looks with mingled fierceness and shame over the group of his conquerors.

"In the first place let us look to your wounds, sir," exclaimed Khalil and producing his own kerchief, he proceeded to bind it round Kolokoff's left arm.

Lucas Vassilo did the same in respect to the Russian captain's right arm, which was also severely wounded, the sleeve of the coat being completely ripped up. The blood was however, stanchd in respect to both wounds; and the meanwhile the slaves ministered with an equal degree of consideration towards that Russian sailor whom Daltaban Pasha's scimitar had stricken down.

"Captain Kolokoff," said Khalil, when those attentions had been paid "what justification have you to offer for this most unprovoked and scandalous outrage? Recollect, I myself assume no power to punish you: it is for his Excellency Daltaban Pasha to decide—and you may therefore consider

that I am only acting as an interpreter between you."

"Do with me what you choose," responded Kolokoff, now drawing himself up with the haughtiest demeanour. "I crave no mercy at the hands of an infidel Turk."

"This arrogance but little becomes you, sir," said Khalil; "for you must bear in mind that you have violated the sanctity of every law. In the first place you have broken the truce which subsists between the two nations; in the second place you have been guilty of a most outrageous aggression on a peaceful and inoffensive party; and in the third place you have acted like a coward in perpetrating a deed which was only too well calculated to fill four of the fair sex with cruel apprehensions."

"Be my crimes as numerous as you represent them," said Kolokoff scornfully, "I am prepared to take the consequences, rather than sue for mercy at the hands of your infidel Pasha. At the same time I warn you that whatsoever evil you wreak upon me will be terribly avenged by my officers who remain on board the frigate: for there are upwards of sixty Turkish prisoners——"

"Which prisoners, sir," interrupted Khalil, indignantly "your officers are bound to liberate at Constantinople in exchange for a similar number whom an Ottoman ship is doubtless already landing at Sebastopol."

"It is all very fine thus to talk," said Kolokoff disdainfully; "but everything may not pass off so smoothly as you fancy. Look! perceive you not those telescopes which over the bulwarks of my vessel are now turned towards us? And see you not that boat which is putting off? Observe! it is a galley—it is manned by twelve rowers! in a few minutes it will be down upon us! Methinks,

Sir Turk, that the fortunes of the conflict may be presently changed. At all events, rest assured that inasmuch as my officers behold all that is taking place here, whatsoever punishment you may inflict upon me will be terribly compensated for by the vengeance wreaked upon your fellow-countrymen on board that ship.

Khalil perceived the truth of all that Kolokoff had said: the telescopes were watching the scene—the twelve-oared galley, crowded with men, was pushing off from the frigate. He saw that the crisis was grave—and all the more so, inasmuch as the caïque lay completely exposed to the frigate's guns; while there was not another Turkish vessel within view. Nothing dismayed however—but, on the contrary, flinging upon Kolokoff a look of disdain—Khalil turned to interpret to the Pasha and the Greeks all that had just taken place. At first Daltaban, abandoning himself to his rage, was about to order the Russian commander's head to be struck off: but Khalil beseeching him not to give way to the extreme indignation of his feelings, said, "Your Excellency must bear in mind that the lives of a number of our fellow countrymen are at the mercy of those barbarians on board the frigate; and judging from the events which have just occurred, these Russians are a set of pirates and marauders rather than honourable and enlightened men."

"By the Prophet!" ejaculated the Pasha, "we will fight that other boat as we have fought the crew of this one!"

"Were not those ladies present," responded Khalil, "I also should say, 'Let us await the coming of that galley, and bear ourselves so that we may achieve another victory.' But a single shot from the cannon of the frigate——"

"True!" exclaimed the Pasha; "the caique might be sunk in a moment! My dear friend Khalil, the crisis is grave: our very victory itself has left us in a position but little advantageous! Arrange you the matter as you think fit. I know that whatever terms you arrive at with this Russian captain will not be dishonourable."

"Yes," said Lucas and Julian, as if in the same breath, "let us leave it to our friend Khalil!"

This discourse did not occupy many minutes; and it was carried on in a manner by no means calculated to make Kolokoff think that Khalil and his friends were at all perplexed how to act. Meantime the twelve-oared galley was shooting nearer and nearer towards the scene where the late conflict had taken place, and where the barge and the caique, lashed together with the grapnel, were almost stationary in the middle of the sluggish but pure and brilliant waters of the Bosphorus.

"His Excellency Daltaban Pasha," said Khalil, again turning towards Kolokoff, "will grant you your liberty on condition that the Turkish prisoner's are previously landed from your frigate."

"And what if I refuse to enter upon any such terms?" said Kolokoff curtly, though no longer speaking insolently.

"Your head will be stricken off!" was Khalil's prompt answer; "and then it will remain for us who have beaten the crew of one of your boats, to trust to the strength of our weapons, and the goodness of our cause, in a conflict with that galley which is approaching. Remember, Captain Kolokoff," added Khalil, "the Pasha's six black slaves are no longer armed with pieces of oars: they wield the cutlasses taken from your seamen!"

"Listen, Sir Turk," said the Russian commander. "I care not for the threat which you have held out against my own life; nor do I for an instant suppose that you and your companions together with your slaves, could do otherwise than fail in a conflict with this galley which is approaching. Behold you not the bristling bayonets in that galley? There is a party of marines—they possess fire-arms——"

"Enough of this verbiage!" ejaculated Khalil. "If you have aught to propose, speak it: but if not, prepare yourself to die, and leave us to the part which will remain to be performed."

"I was about to observe," said Kolokoff, coldly and haughtily, "that it were indeed a pity for more blood to be shed; and therefore I will accept your terms. Ah! but your Pasha must undertake that this little frolic of mine shall be consigned to oblivion—or at all events that it shall not be mentioned as matter of complaint to the Russian Government."

"So far as matters have yet gone," answered Khalil, "it is our side which has inflicted chastisement and therefore finds itself in a condition to show mercy."

"Mercy? ejaculated Kolokoff scornfully."

"Yes—*mercy*, sir is the word—and you know it!" rejoined Khalil with stern emphasis. "Your stipulation shall be agreed to. But you will at once adopt the measures which I shall suggest for effecting the liberation of the Turkish prisoners whom you have on board your frigate; and in the meantime you will remain a prisoner in the hands of his Excellency the Pasha. Do not interrupt me! In five minutes the galley will be down upon us and I swear by everything that both yourself and I deem sacred, your head shall be stricken off unless

in the brief interval you have pledged yourself to the conditions I am about to impose!"

"Proceed," said Kolokoff,—who, now that some of his fiery blood had been let out of his veins began to look upon his mad-cap adventure in its gravest light.

"You will order that galley which is approaching, to take me on board your frigate," continued Khalil, "that with my own eyes I may satisfy myself that every one of the Ottoman prisoners is instantaneously landed on the nearest shore of the Bosphorus. Meanwhile you will remain a prisoner in the caïque. When the galley brings me back from your frigate, you shall return in that selfsame galley, and the conditions of the compact will be fulfilled. Now quick! your decision, Captain Kolokoff—for the galley is approaching.

"Why keep me prisoner?" he demanded.

"Why object, if you mean fairly?" quickly asked Khalil. "An hour will suffice for the safe landing of my fellow-countrymen from your frigate; and I myself shall be a hostage in the power of your officers for your own honourable treatment in the hands of the Pasha."

"I agree!" exclaimed Kolokoff who saw that his assent was indeed the only means of preventing a fresh effusion of blood—though in justice it must be observed that he cared little or nothing for his own life."

"The galley is now near enough," said Khalil for the officer in command to receive your orders. Give them!—but beware how you attempt to deal treacherously: for though I understand not the Russian tongue, yet shall I be enabled to judge by your very looks whether your speech be in sincere conformance with the terms we laid down."

The galley was rapidly approaching. In addition to the twelve rowers and the first lieutenant (who had himself taken the command of it) there were half-a-dozen sailors and about a dozen marines: but they were also so crowded together that Khalil could not restrain himself from saying to Kolokoff, "Methinks that we should not have incurred the great danger of defeat which you, sir, appeared to imagine."

Kolokoff made no response to this observation: but hailing his first lieutenant, he issued some rapidly uttered orders. The young Turk—with his sabre in readiness to cut the Russian captain down at the slightest indication of treachery—watched his countenance with a keen and steadfast gaze; but he felt assured that in this instance at least Kolokoff was acting a straightforward part. The lieutenant and all the men who were on board the galley, showed by their countenances the deep annoyance they experienced at the result of their captains mad-brained freak; and when Kolokoff's orders were issued, all those countenances grew moody and sombre as if through disappointment—with the exception of the lieutenant's features; and they afforded no indication of what he himself in reality felt.

Khalil in a very few words explained to the Pasha and the two Greeks the nature of the arrangements into which he had entered with Kolokoff: but both Lucas and Julian, with much affectionate concern, inquired whether he thought he was acting prudently in placing himself in the power of the Russians?

"If we liberate this captain at once," responded the young Turk. "rest assured that he will wreak upon my fellow-countrymen on board the frigate the revengeful



malignity inspired by the defeat which he has sustained at our hands. It is a paramount necessity therefore, that I should carry out the only measures which will ensure the safe and prompt liberation of those Ottoman captives."

"Brave and excellent young men," exclaimed the Pasha warmly grasping Khalil by the hand: "you are ever as courageous to execute as you are fertile to conceive a plan to meet the pressing emergency of an occasion!"

Lucas and Julian evinced a similar admiration for the gallant and magnanimous Khalil,—who was now in readiness to proceed to the frigate.

"Say everything that is encouraging and reassuring to the ladies," he observed, "so that they may labour under no apprehension on my account. Watch you well likewise over the Russian captain: for these barbarians are not to be trusted one little more than is absolutely necessary.

Having thus spoken to the Pasha and his two Greek friends, Khalil again turned towards Kolokoff, and he said, "I presume your instructions are given—and that naught now remains but for me to repair on board your frigate?"

"My instructions are given," replied the Russian captain, "in strictest accordance with the stipulations already settled between us."

Khalil now unhesitatingly stepped into the galley: the lieutenant rose to receive him: and the young Turk's courteously dignified salutation was returned by the Russian lieutenant with more respectful civility than that which his superior Kolokoff would have condescended to display. The twelve sailors of the galley bent to their oars; and the long elegantly-shaped bark glided away from the neighbourhood of

the two boats that remained lashed together.

We have for some time lost sight of the ladies. When the combat began, Ismilda, as we have seen could not possibly restrain the terror which she experienced: while the three younger ladies were now more or less smitten with anxiety on account of their lovers, notwithstanding the confidence which they felt in their skill and prowess. The conflict was not a very long one: and when it was concluded, silent prayers of thankfulness went up to heaven from the hearts of Gulnare, Thyrsa and Zuleika: while Ismilda—who did *not* pray—experienced an ineffable relief. Then followed the colloquies of the Russian commander—the arrival of the galley—and the embarkation of Khalil in it. The ladies were perfectly at a loss to comprehend what this last proceeding could signify: but both Lucas and Julian hastened to explain it; and then Ismilda was smitten with the dread that she should see the beautifully handsome Turk no more. Zuleika for a few instants felt some little anxiety: but then she recollected how invariably well weighed were all Khalil's plans—how largely discretion blended with the magnanimity of his disposition; and she was alike comforted and reassured. Besides, as the galley past the caique, Zuleika caught the quick glance of intelligence which Khalil threw thitherward in such a manner that while Ismilda might think it was meant for her, the amiable and beautiful Zuleika might surely know it was intended for herself.

The galley swept away from the scene of those incidents which we have been describing: and Khalil found that the Russian lieutenant could speak French even better than his superior,

Kolokoff. They therefore conversed together on general topics during the brief interval occupied by the transition to the ship,—not a word however being said in allusion to the circumstances which thus had thrown them together. It was now four o'clock in the afternoon: a gentle breeze was springing up to afford its refreshing relief after the sultry medium portion of the day: the atmosphere was delicious—the scene, as we have already said was surpassingly fair. The frigate lay perfectly still, as if it were something built up from the bed of the Bosphorus rather than an object floating upon its waters: the sails were all closely furled; and the three tall tapering masts sustained the web-like tracery of the rigging—the whole standing out in relief against the azure back-ground of the sky.

The galley soon ran alongside the "Ivan the Terrible;" and the twelve oars were instantaneously raised perpendicularly up into the air. The lieutenant requested Khalil to precede him in the ascent to the deck; and the young Turk set his foot with a calm dignified confidence on board the Muscovite vessel. The lieutenant conducted him to the cabin, where with great politeness, he requested him to be seated; and he offered refreshments. These however were declined,—observing that he wished to conclude as speedily as possible the business that had brought him thither, so that the captivity of Captain Kolokoff might not be unnecessarily prolonged.

The lieutenant now produced a list of names; and he presented the paper to Khalil. Our hero, on glancing over its contents, perceived that it comprised the names of about sixty Ottoman prisoners of war whom the "Ivan the Terrible" had on board.

"Your object, I believe," said the lieutenant, "if I understand the captain aright, is to satisfy yourself of the safe disembarkation of these individuals. My commands are to give you every assurance on that point. The boats will be almost immediately in readiness: and if with this list in your hand you will station yourself at the gangway of the frigate—you may count the number of those who pass down into the boats—or you may even call out each name in succession if you think fit."

"I believe that I am addressing myself to a man of honour," said Khalil, who had formed a much higher opinion of the lieutenant than that which he entertained of the captain; "and it will be sufficient for me if I count the number of those liberated Ottoman prisoners who are about to pass from the frigate into the boats."

At this moment a young officer entered the cabin, and made some announcement to the lieutenant.

"Everything is now in readiness for the debarkation," said the latter rising off his seat.

Khalil accompanied the lieutenant to the deck; and there he beheld his fellow-countrymen who were about to be liberated. They were all officers, but of different grades,—ranging from the humble second lieutenants, or ensigns, up to the colonels. Both in their uniform and their physical appearance, they bore painful traces of the hardships they had endured; and it made the generous Khalil's heart bleed to contemplate their haggard looks. No one amongst them was personally known to him: nor was he himself known to any of them. They were however unfeignedly rejoiced to behold a fellow-countryman; and as no explanation was given to account for his presence,

they supposed that he was some young official who had been despatched by their Government to witness and to certify their safe landing. The frigate had cast its anchor close in by the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus; and it was therefore on this side of the Strait that the liberated prisoners were to be landed. But a walk of some four miles would bring them to Scutari, opposite to Constantinople; and this was no particular hardship for men who by the very profession to which they belonged were inured to all fatigues, and who were only too glad to obtain their freedom at any price.

As they passed out of the frigate, Khalil carefully counted them, and he found that the number was complete. The last of the liberated Osmanlis descended the frigate's side; and then Khalil, restoring the paper to the lieutenant, said, "You have afforded me the completest satisfaction on this point."

One of the ship's boats, he it remembered, had been left attached to the caique; and all the others were now in requisition, to convey the liberated prisoners of war to the shore. Khalil was therefore obliged to wait until this transport-service was accomplished; and then the lieutenant intimated to him that he might take his departure. He found that the twelve-oared galley was again to become the medium of conveyance; but no marines were now ordered into the boat—nor were there any supernumerary sailors—none but the twelve rowers and the young officer whom the lieutenant had ordered to undertake this special duty. Khalil thanked the lieutenant for his courtesy; and descending the ship's side entered the galley. Quickly it glided over the shining waters of the Bosphorus; and

as it drew nearer and nearer towards the caique and the barge, Khalil perceived that the position of affairs was but little altered during his absence of about an hour; Captain Kolokoff was seated in the bow of the barge; Daltaban Pasha, with his drawn sword was standing near him: the black slaves had charge of the Russian sailors, while in the caique Lucas and Julian were conversing with the ladies under the awning of silk and gold. Again did Khalil fling a quick glance in that direction as the galley shot in towards the two boats—a glance which was in reality intended for the well-beloved Zuleika but which the Pasha's wife might appropriate to herself if she thought fit.

"Is everything satisfactory?" exclaimed Daltaban Pasha, raising his voice as he thus addressed Khalil.

"The conditions have been faithfully kept on the Russian side," responded the young Turk; "and your Excellency may at once give Captain Kolokoff his word and permit him to enter the galley."

"Not till you come forth, Khalil" ejaculated the Pasha.

"My lord," answered the young Turk, "we will not show such exceeding mistrustfulness of that Russian officer. It were ungenerous, now that all our objects are gained."

As this conversation took place in the Turkish language Kolokoff did not comprehend it: but he was quickly led to suspect what its nature was, when Khalil said to him, "I am satisfied. You have fulfilled the conditions: and you are now free. His Excellency the Pasha will restore you your sword: and may I hope that on a future occasion you will wield it in a more worthy cause."

Kolokoff rose up from his

seat in the barge: he received his sword from the Pasha, and he entered the galley from which Khalil now stepped forth into the caique.

"Captain Kolokoff," he said leaning over the side of the caique, "if in restoring your seamen to liberty we withhold from them their weapons, you must not deem us guilty of unhandsome conduct: it is only a precaution which we adopt and in which we are justified after all that has occurred."

The Russian captain bowed coldly and haughtily—but made no verbal response. Daltaban Pasha on a hint from the young Turk, commanded the black slaves to liberate their prisoners but to retain possession of the cutlasses—and to return into the caique. All this was done:—the Pasha himself had already stepped into his own boat, and was returned to his seat beneath the awning. The six black slaves, armed with the cutlasses, glided to their benches, in readiness to ply their oars again; for they had sufficient spare ones on board to replace those which had been broken up.

The galley was now floating at a distance of about twenty yards from the caique: but the Russian barge still remained attached to the head of that Turkish pleasure vessel. By an oversight the slave who had omitted to throw the grapnel into the barge. Khalil—who was standing close at the head of the caique—at once began to detach the grapnel: but as he tread it from the place where it had seized hold of the wood-work inside the caique it caught his garments; and as some sudden current sent the two boats apart, the young Turk was in the twinkling of an eye dragged into the water. Shrieks burst from the lips of the ladies; Lucas and Vassilo bounded forward to lend

their assistance, or to spring into the Bosphorus if needful. But not more quickly does the swiftest bird sweep through the air than did the galley dart in towards the spot where Khalil had thus become immersed; for Kolokoff the moment the accident occurred, made a sign to the rowers—and one sweep of their oars gave that prompt impulse to the galley. The Russian sailors stretched out their hands: they caught Khalil by his garments—and they dragged him into the boat.

Lucas and Julian had stopped short at the side of the caique just at the moment that they were about to leap into the water; for it naturally struck them that this achievement on the part of the Russians was nothing more than the spontaneous generosity of individuals who rushed forward to save a fellow-creature from perishing. Nothing therefore could exceed their surprise and indignation, when on a few words of command being vehemently uttered by Kolokoff, some of the sailors held fast upon Khalil as their prisoner; and the others, backing their oars with marvellous rapidity, sent the galley sweeping out to a distance. The barge was likewise free: the seamen in that boat also plied their oars vigorously; and those on board the caique were thus rendered conscious that the accident had been seized upon as the means of perpetrating an abominable piece of treachery.

"Round with the caique!—to your oars! to your oars!" exclaimed Daltaban Pasha, furious with rage as he thus addressed himself to the black slaves. "We will pursue them, we will fight for our beloved Khalil unto the very death!"

"No, my lord!" cried the young Turk: "risk nothing—dare nothing desperate on my account! Fear not! Proceed on your way!

In an hour I will join you. Fear not, I repeat!—and take no measures in the hope of succouring me—nor raise any alarm elsewhere!”

These words being uttered in the Turkish language, were not comprehended by any of the Russians; and Khalil had been enabled to give utterance to this much before the galley had shot too far away for his voice, if he had continued speaking to be drowned in the distance. Daltaban Pasha stood irresolute: he knew not what to say nor how to act. Lucas Vassilo and Julian Meleda could scarcely restrain themselves from plunging into the water with the insane idea of swimming after the galley. As for the four ladies, they all gave way to their lamentations. Zuleika was however the first to grow comparatively calm: because she knew enough of Khalil's character to be well aware that he would not have proclaimed those assurances, and so positively forbidden any intervention on his behalf were it not that he already foresaw a means of extricating himself from the difficulty in which he was placed. Yet what the means were, Zuleika was at a loss to conceive: for she knew perfectly well that the talismanic ring would have no effect upon the Russian barbarians.

Daltaban Pasha, recovering from his bewilderment, began to rage and storm anew. First, he repeated his command for the caïque to be put about so that the Russian boats might be pursued: then he altered his mind, and ordered the slaves to pull with all haste towards Constantinople, that an alarm might be raised and a man-of-war sent out from the Golden Horn to the Russian frigate if it should weigh anchor, or capture it if it did not attempt to fly. But Zuleika, gliding to-

wards her uncle, besought him to listen to reason. She reminded him of the earnest injunctions Khalil had just uttered: she assured him that the young Turk never deceived himself with an overweening confidence in his own powers: she expressed her conviction that he had the best possible reasons for giving those injunctions and for deprecating any publicity in respect to the adventure. Lucas and Julian recognised all that was reasonable and argumentative in Zuleika's speech; and they adopted her view of the case. The Pasha therefore yielded to these untitled representations: but he vowed that he would not return home until he had seen the issue of this new phase in the afternoon's occurrences. So the caïque continued to float almost stationary once more, on the shining waters of the Bosphorus; and the six black slaves all rested on their flexible oars.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE TWO DETONATING BALLS.

MEANWHILE the galley and the barge were returning to wards the frigate—the former, however, considerably outstripping the latter. When Khalil had sent his voice pealing over the water, proclaiming those earnest injunctions which we have already recorded, he turned towards Captain, Kolokoff, and said, “Sir I do not attempt to remonstrate—much less do I condescend to entreaty with one who is capable of so perfidious an act as this. But at least order your men to unhand me. You see that I am incapable of offering any resistance.”

Kolokoff made a sign to the

sailors, who still retained their strong hold upon Khalil; and having dispossessed him of his sabre, they released him from their grasp. Scarcely was the young Turk thus free, then he thrust his right hand into the bosom of his garments; and drawing forth some object, he dashed it down upon the seat of the boat. It exploded with a loud din, sending up a cloud of wreathing vapour high into the air.

This proceeding caused so sudden a start, not only amongst the sailors, but likewise with Kolokoff himself, that the galley vibrated from stem to stern, throughout the whole sweeping length, with the quick galvanic impulse so to speak that was given to it. Kolokoff's sword flashed from its sheath, and was raised to cut Khalil down: for the first impression was that the young Turk had used some explosive object for the purpose of sinking the galley.

"What!" said Khalil, folding his arms across his chest and speaking with a calm dignity—at the same time, however, that he bent a half-scornful look upon the Russian captain—"that sword which was so recently given back to you at my intercession with the Pasha, is now raised to take my life! Strike, sir, if you will: but even your very serf-like mariners here would hold you in contempt and abhorrence for dealing so coward a blow at one who is unarmed."

Kolokoff felt all the bitterness and all the justice of this reproach, the blood crimsoned his countenance and as he restored his weapon to its sheath, he said, "It was your own fault that I should have raised my sword against you!"

"My fault?" exclaimed Khalil: scornfully. "Wherefore am I here? With what treachery have you rewarded the magnanimity

which dictated the treatment shown unto yourself?"

"Answer me one word!" said Kolokoff, impetuously. "What meant that signal which you have just given?"

"First tell me," responded Khalil, "am I to be taken on board that frigate?"

"Assuredly," rejoined Kolokoff. "Do you not perceive that the galley is shooting thither?"

"Then, on reaching the deck of that frigate," replied Khalil, "I will explain to you the meaning of the signal which has just been given by the aid of that explosive ball?"

Having thus spoken, the young Turk sate down with an air of calmly dignified indifference. Kolokoff would fain have gone on questioning him; but his pride would not permit him to betray all he felt on account of that mysterious signal. Again did the Russian captain repent of the precipitate rashness of his conduct: he was sorry that he had been guilty of such headstrong madness as to make Khalil his prisoner. He felt all the perfidy of the action: he knew that he had placed himself in a light that was absolutely odious and infamous in contrast with the generosity and the magnanimity with which he himself had been treated. Until the instant Khalil had fallen into the water Kolokoff had not dreamt of any treachery nor of any further violent aggression; but when that accident occurred, he acted on the sudden impulse of the moment—he made the signal for his men to seize upon Khalil—and having him in his power, he kept him. Now he felt that he had placed himself in a false position; and the signal which Khalil had made by means of the explosive ball troubled him sorely. He saw likewise that the countenances of his men were

gloomy and sullen, as if they themselves felt that through their commander's rashness they were becoming exposed to some unknown danger which might explode around them as abruptly and as unexpectedly as that detonating ball had just burst in the boat.

Captain Kolokoff was in a state of mind as little enviable as possible. He inwardly cursed his rashness—yet knew not how to repair its consequences. If Khalil would only deign to ask for his life and liberty, Kolokoff would gladly send him back to the caïque. But no!—the young Turk, with that noble dignity which characterized him, had spurned the ideas alike of remonstrance and entreaty. The false pride of Kolokoff would not permit him to volunteer that act of justice which was not besought and yet on the other hand he had dark and gloomy forebodings of impending evils as the result of the course which he was pursuing. Feeling how immeasurably insignificant he had from first to last shown himself in contrast with Khalil, the Russian captain experienced the most deadly hatred—or rather we should say the most malignant spite, against the young Turk, and he now endeavoured to persuade himself that he was perfectly justified in the course he was adopting, and that he had a right to wreak his revenge upon Khalil for his recent humiliation and defeat in the attack upon the Pasha's pleasure-vessel.

We must interrupt the thread of our narrative for a few moments to observe that the explosion of the detonating ball was both heard and seen on board the caïque, and though, as a signal, it was perfectly incomprehensible to the Pasha and his companions, yet, in its very mystery did it

seem to corroborate Zuleika's representations that Khalil knew perfectly well how to extricate himself from his present dilemma, and that it was therefore with the best possible reason he had issued the injunctions which he had advised her uncle to follow.

The galley ran alongside the frigate; and as Khalil glanced up towards the gangway, he beheld the first lieutenant looking down towards him. That officer's countenance indicated mingled surprise and vexation on beholding the young Turk evidently a prisoner in that galley: for Khalil had indeed formed a correct estimate of the lieutenant's character when he had supposed it to be very different from that of his commander. The lieutenant felt assured that some piece of treachery had been perpetrated by Kolokoff towards the young Turk; and, in his heart deprecating such a proceeding, he could not now prevent his features from betraying what he felt.

Kolokoff failed not to perceive his lieutenant's gloomy look; and he therefore at once put on a haughty sternness of demeanour which should have the effect of preventing any disagreeable remonstrance from being addressed to him. At the same time, much as he longed to wreak his bitter spite with the extremest vindictiveness upon Khalil, he dared not treat him with actual brutality—for he plainly perceived that his lieutenant in the gangway, as well as his men in the galley, were impressed with the conviction that he had gone too far.

Kolokoff made a sign for Khalil to ascend the ship's side; and the young Turk obeyed it with that calm dignity which he had all along preserved; and, with which a certain amount of scornful defiance was blended. Kolokoff, immediately followed. Khalil, on

touching the quarter-deck, bowed with gracious courtesy to the lieutenant,—as much as to imply that he at once acquitted him of any complicity in the perfidious and unhandsome conduct of which he had been made the victim. Then stepping a few paces apart, Khalil drew forth another and still larger detonating ball from amidst the folds of his garments: he dashed it upon the deck—it exploded with a loud din—and the cloud of vapour rolled up into the air, its light fleecy volumes wreathing and curling amidst the loftier part of the frigate's rigging.

Again did Kolokoff start with sudden dismay, and he laid his hand upon his sword; Khalil bent upon him a look of such lofty scorn and contempt that the Russian captain's hand quitted the hilt of that sword as rapidly as it had grasped it—and his countenance became flushed with shame. Then, by a swift revulsion of the feelings, it grew livid with rage; and he exclaimed, "seize upon this Turk! To the yard-arm with him!"

There had been a rush of many feet along the deck of the frigate when the detonating ball had exploded, for all who were on board were seized with a sudden panic, as if the vessel and all it contained were about to be blown up into the air. Again therefore was Khalil surrounded and roughly grasped by Russian sailors. He attempted not a resistance which he knew to be completely vain; but he still bore himself with all the dignity of the loftiest courage. The sailors who had seized upon him, looked towards their captain for additional instructions: they did not like to act on the spur of the moment and reeve a rope round the young captive's neck.

"Captain Kolokoff," said the

lieutenant, approaching his superior, and speaking in a low, but earnest voice, "you surely will not carry out a vindictive sentence against this gallant young Turk?"

"What mean these signals which you have twice given?" demanded Kolokoff, turning haughtily away from the lieutenant, and addressing himself to Khalil.

"Being undismayed by your threats," responded the young Turk, "I might, with as much hauteur as you yourself display, refuse to afford you one single syllable of explanation. It, however suits my purpose to tell you what these signals mean."

"Proceed!" cried Kolokoff, who could not repress certain evidences of the feverish curiosity which inspired him.

"Bid these ruffians unhand me," said Khalil, with the air of command, and not with the slightest look or accent of entreaty.

"Yes—when they have searched you," rejoined Kolokoff, and have taken from you those detonating balls."

"I shall use no more of them," interjected Khalil. "My purpose is fully served by the two signals I have already made. Take therefore, if you will, whatsoever detonating balls I may have left. To me it is a matter of perfect indifference."

Kolokoff made a signal for the sailors to stand away from Khalil; and he was unloosed from their grasp.

"Now for your explanations?" said the Russian captain.

"They will prove somewhat lengthy," answered Khalil: and cannot be given in a few minutes. Besides, singular as the assertion may seem, it is not the less true that I may have to illustrate my explanation by means of paper and pencil."

"Follow me to my cabin," said Kolokoff, curtly.



"Yes: but I will only speak to you in the presence of a witness," rejoined Khalil; "and as your lieutenant understands this language in which we are discoursing, it is my desire that he be present."

"Your *desire*?" said Kolokoff, haughtily, as if he felt that Khalil was assuming the part of a dictator.

"Yes—it is my desire," repeated the young Turk, with calm dignity. "You certainly have it in your power to murder me by the aid of those ruffians who obey you; but even if backed by all your crew, you have not the means of forcing explanations from my lips."

"Come then," said Kolokoff, who could not help feelings that though he stood an autocratic commander on the deck of that vessel, yet that by some mysterious and irresistible influence, Khalil was bending him to his own will.

They descended into the cabin,—Kolokoff leading the way—Khalil following—and the lieutenant closing the rear. The cabin was entered—the door was shut; and Kolokoff motioned to Khalil to seat himself at the table. The young Turk complied: the captain and the lieutenant also sat down; and they both waited with strange feelings of suspense for the explanations which Khalil might have to give. Our young hero drew towards him a sheet of paper and took up a pencil: but without immediately using these materials, he began to speak as follows:—

"I am not about to use a single syllable of reproach or remonstrance for the treatment I have experienced, much less shall I condescend to implore mercy, Captain Kolokoff, at your hands. It is my intention to describe to you and to your lieutenant a most extraordinary combination of

sciences,—the object of which is to add another, and indeed most terrible engine of warfare to those which the devilish ingenuity of man had previously invented. You will then see what connexion there is between that description and the position in which I am now placed—the position in which *you* also are placed, with your ship and all its crew: and you will likewise comprehend the meaning of those signals I have conveyed by assistance of the detonating balls.

These words increased to a most poignant degree the suspense of curiosity, wonder, and bewilderment which Kolokoff had already experienced and in which his lieutenant shared. But as for the captain especially,—there was likewise a vague and sombre terror in his mind; for it was impossible to look upon Khalil's countenance: so calmly dignified and self-possessed, without being impressed with the conviction that this confidence on his part was built upon the most solid foundations.

"There lately came to Constantinople," proceeded the young Turk, "a French Engineer of extraordinary ability. He addressed himself to the Grand Vizier, offering to dispose of a secret—a secret of tremendous importance—to the Ottoman Government. From the preliminary information which he gave the Vizier, the Captain Pasha—our Lord High Admiral, as you are aware—was summoned to the conference. Two of the most able shipwrights and two of the most skilful Engineers in the Imperial dockyard were likewise called in to hear the Frenchman's explanations. The result was that the Grand Vizier determined upon entertaining the Frenchman's views and purchasing his secret. Circumstances—no matter what they were—led me to become

acquainted with all that was thus passing; and if I am about to give you such explanations as may at the first glance appear to be a complete revelation of the entire secret, it really is not so: for I shall purposely suppress a few particulars which, though their absence will not mar the general effect of what I have to explain, would nevertheless prove indispensable for yourselves to become acquainted with if you thought of imparting the secret to your own Government."

A deeper astonishment was, if possible, now expressed upon the countenance of the captain and lieutenant: but they said not a word; and Khalil continued in the following manner:—

"Under the superintendence of the French engineer of whom I have been speaking, a vessel of peculiar fashion has been constructed with all possible secrecy in the Imperial dockyard. I will at once state that its object is for submarine navigation—or, in plainer terms, to ply beneath the surface of the water instead of floating upon its bosom. Behold! I will trace its configuration, and I will mark out its details on this paper. The vessel is thirty feet in length; and it is built in the form of a fish. Mark! The tail serves as the rudder, the tiller of which passes through a stuffing-box rendered perfectly watertight. What would be the fins of the fish are the oars or propellers of this boat: they also work with handles, or arms—whichever you may choose to term them—passing through water-tight stuffing-boxes. For, inasmuch as these fins may be turned in any direction, they can propel the boat forward or backward, or give to it an upward or a downward motion, at the pleasure of those inside. In all these movements the fins are assisted by the tail, which serves

as a paddle as well as a rudder. Such is the sharpness of the boat both fore and aft, that its velocity in its submarine progress is truly marvellous. What would be the eyes of the fish are windows for the boat,—consisting of very thick pieces of the most beautiful transparent glass. Having reached thus far with my explanations, I must pause to inquire whether you perfectly comprehend them?"

"Perfectly," responded Kolo-koff and the lieutenant, both speaking as it were in the same breath: and both were full of a sort of bewilderment as they followed the details of the diagram which Khalil traced upon the paper."

"I now proceed to the next stage of my explanations," continued the young Turk; "and I beg that you will follow me with the utmost attention. The fish-like vessel is divided into three compartments, each ten feet in length; and the partitions or bulkheads, which separate them are perforated with numerous holes, for a reason which I shall presently explain. I will first speak of the compartment at the tail of the fish-like boat. It is here that the tiller of the rudder works, and where stores may be compactly stowed away. There is only just room for one individual—namely, the steersman: but by means of a pipe, or prolonged and stationary speaking-trumpet, orders can be conveyed to him from either of the other two compartments. I should observe that as a matter of course, in the bulkheads or partitions there are doors of communication between the compartments which they thus respectively divide off. The central compartment is a laboratory: it is provided with all the requisite chemical apparatus for artificially replenishing the wasting and absorbing elements of the natural air

at first received into the vessel before it is submerged. By means of this laboratory half-a-dozen human beings may live and respire without the slightest inconvenience for five or six hours without receiving into the vessel any fresh supply of the natural air. It is on the upper part of this compartment—in the middle of what would be the fish's back—that a square trap-door is formed to afford the means of ingress and egress. This trap-door is made to shut with such hermetical precision that it is perfectly water-tight. You may also understand the use of the countless holes with which the bulkheads or partitions are perforated: they are for the purpose of suffering the artificial air chemically formed in the laboratory to penetrate and gradually to blend with the air in the other compartments. Of the laboratory and of its contrivances I shall say no more: it is in the details of *this* compartment that the very essence of the inventor's ingenuity is concentrated; and without the knowledge of such details all the rest that I am telling you remains valueless in your minds as a great secret. Have you followed me well in my explanations so far as they have gone?"

"I have," responded Kolokoff, who had totally forgotten all his bitterness of feeling, his animosity, and his rancour—his smarting sense of defeat—his vexation at his own conduct—all, everything, in short, in the absorbing interest with which he had listened to the young Turk's wondrous revelations.

"And you also?" asked Khalil, addressing himself to the lieutenant.

"It appears to me as if I were in a dream," replied the honest

Russian sailors: "I can scarcely believe my own ears!"

"Perhaps the most interesting portion of my description is as yet to come," resumed Khalil; "for I have now to speak of the remaining compartment—namely, that which is constituted by what we may term the head and shoulder of the fish. It is in this compartment that the handles or stocks of the fins work through stuffing-boxes. They can be shortened or lengthened at pleasure, and as circumstances may direct; and, as I have already stated, they can work in every direction—upward or downward—backward or forward; and it is surprising with what readiness and velocity the vessel obeys these oars. In short, the submarine boat is as completely manageable as if it were itself imbued with the influence of the directing mind and the volition of the governing individual on board. The two other compartments which I have already explained are of necessity lighted by lamps; but this front compartment to which I am now directing your attention has the benefit of transparent glass eyes, which in daytime render the little place perfectly clear although the vessel may be submerged to a considerable depth. If the boat be employed for any purpose at night-time, a lamp may also be used in this front compartment. But now I must solicit your particular attention to that stage of the explanations on which we are now about to enter: for until this moment you have no idea of the actual service which the submarine vessel is capable of rendering. Your utmost attention is now desired; and you will perhaps follow me with your eyes while I illustrate my meaning by the drawings on this paper. Look! On the upper part

of the fish, just at the point where the head joins the back, a combustible machine is attached. It is about a foot and a half in diameter, and filled with those materials that are best calculated to work frightful execution. The name of this dread machine is *the torpedo*. Observe! it has a strong and sharp iron spike sticking out from the top. Inside the shell it has an admirably contrived piece of clockwork mechanism, by which the hour and the moment at which the explosion is to take place can be regulated with the nicest accuracy and exactitude. Do you comprehend me?"

"Yes," responded Kolokoff: and his eyes wandered from the diagram on the table to the countenance of the young Turk, as if to read in those beautifully handsome features the solution of a series of mysterious explanations which now excited a strange and vague misgiving as well as an intense curiosity.

"I have but little more to say," resumed Khalil. "I have shown you how this fish-like vessel which I have described is admirably adapted for submarine navigation: you yourself must have already comprehended that by the aid of a few of such submarine boats a whole fleet might be blown up in a very few hours—"

"Good heavens! is this possible?" ejaculated Kolokoff, starting up from his seat; but then the next moment sitting down again, he forced himself to look cold and stern, as he said, "But I see not, Sir Turk, how this long story of your's bears any reference to the two detonating balls which you have thrown—one in the boat, the other on board my ship."

"Might they not have been signal for some particular purpose?" asked Khalil. But I will explain myself. Look, Captain

Kolokoff—and you also, Sir Lieutenant. When the stately ship is riding at anchor, the submarine vessel is gliding snake-like towards it, unseen—unsuspected. It places itself beneath the huge floating hulk—the spike of the torpedo touches the bottom of that ship—one powerful blow is then dealt by a mallet on the iron pivot within the front compartment of the submarine vessel—the torpedo adheres fast to the great ship. The pivot, or iron stock by which the torpedo is provisionally held on to the head of the submarine boat is in two pieces; the lower piece remains tight in the hole where the torpedo was held fast, so that not a drop of water penetrates into the boat. Away glides the boat—the torpedo adheres to the ship—the internal mechanism is at work; and at the very moment for which that mechanism was regulated the torpedo explodes—and what becomes of *your* stately frigate?"

"Mine?" ejaculated Kolokoff, again springing up from his seat, and with an irrepressible terror depicted upon his countenance: for brave though he were, there was something horrible and awful to a degree in the species of menace just flung out at him.

"Yes—*your* frigate, Captain Kolkoff, answered Khalil, with dignified coolness and with a calm, manly self-possession. "You now comprehend the motive of my two signals. The explosion of the detonating ball on board the galley conveyed the order that the submarine boat should at once be gotten in readiness; and the explosion of the second ball on board your frigate was an intimation that *this* is the ship to which the terrible torpedo is to be affixed."

"Horrible! horrible!" ejaculated Kolokoff, becoming deadly pale. "And your own life—"

"Will be sacrificed along with yours," rejoined Khalil, calmly. "But of what value is my life if I am deprived of liberty? Besides, did you not ere now ordain that I should be hanged to the yard-arm?—and did I not foresee, when so treacherously made your prisoner, that you would act mercilessly and implacably towards me? Therefore was I resolved to be avenged. While we are yet speaking, the torpedo is being affixed—"

"Wretch! you shall die!" vociferated Kolokoff, drawing his sword and rushing towards Khalil.

But the first lieutenant darted in between them; and seizing Kolokoff's sword, he tore it from his grasp.

"Back, sir—back!" exclaimed the lieutenant, in the peremptory tone of command. "Your follies, your treacheries, and your insane proceedings have gone far enough. It is time they should finish. Behold, sir! I am now captain *here*!"

"You?" cried Kolokoff, his countenance white with rage: but the next moment his whole form trembled with apprehension as the lieutenant drew forth from his pocket an official document bearing a large seal.

"This," said the lieutenant, "is an order signed by the Lord High Admiral, and empowering me to assume the command of the Imperial frigate the 'Ivan the Terrible' at any moment when circumstances may have reached such a point of gravity as to render this intervention absolutely necessary for the safety of the ship. That moment is come. Captain Kolokoff," added the lieutenant sternly, "consider yourself under arrest—and speak not another syllable."

The discomfited Kolokoff—who now felt himself to be only a small and insignificant portion of

that immense machinery of despotism which constituted the Russian system—yielded with a mechanical submission, bowed respectfully to him who all in a moment had thus become his superior, and retreated to his chair.

"Signor," said the lieutenant, now quickly turning towards Khalil, "you are a gentleman of honour—and you will answer me truly. Is it too late to save this ship? As I am a living man, I will give you your freedom!—I will make all possible atonement for the wrongs and indignities which yourself and your friends have suffered—"

"Enough!" interrupted Khalil. "I accept your assurance: for I believe that *you* also are a man of honour. It is not too late to save your ship—and I will save it."

"Do what you will—you are your own master," hastily rejoined the lieutenant: "but save this ship, I entreat you."

"Come!" said Khalil: and he passed out of the cabin.

He ascended to the quarter-deck, followed by the lieutenant: and exclaiming, "Bid your men keep off me!" the young Turk dashed down another detonating ball which instantaneously exploded.

The injunction to bid the Russian sailors keep at a distance, was rendered necessary, inasmuch as with stern and ominous countenances they had begun to press on towards our youthful hero: for they were full of sinister misgivings on account of those former detonating ball which had exploded.

"Stand back, men—I command you!" exclaimed the lieutenant: and his order was at once obeyed.

"That signal which I have just given," said Khalil, "will have the effect of producing a delay of half an hour in respect to the

operations of the submarine vessel. I now demand the fulfilment of your promise. Suffer me to depart—and I pledge myself for your safety."

"Is there no atonement I can make," asked the lieutenant, "for the conduct of him whom I have just superseded in the command of this frigate?"

"None," replied Khalil. "The courtesy of your own conduct is sufficient."

The lieutenant issued a hasty mandate—the sailors sprang down again into the galley; and the officer then said to Khalil, "I myself will accompany you: I will see you in safety on board the caique; and I will apologise to the Pasha and your other friends for the unprovoked infamy of the treatment which they have experienced."

The young Turk and the Russian lieutenant descended into the galley, which immediately put away from the ship's side.

"I know not whether I may be permitted," said the lieutenant, "to question you any farther with reference to that marvellous submarine boat of which you have spoken: but if all your details be strictly accurate—as I am bound to believe that they are—"

"They are accurate in every respect," replied Khalil; "but as I informed you on board your frigate, I purposely suppressed the most material part of those details—for a very obvious reason."

"I can well understand, signor," said the lieutenant, "that you invoked the aid of the submarine boat to wreak a vengeance which would have been only too well deserved, if additional injury had been inflicted on yourself. But this is what I would now ask:—Am I to consider myself bound by honour not to reveal whatsoever you have told me? am I to impose

a similar secrecy upon Kolokoff? and am I, on my return to the frigate, to destroy the diagram which you left upon the table? If you insist upon all this, I swear that as a man of honour I will obey you. But if on the other hand you leave me at liberty to use my own discretion, I candidly inform you that I shall conceive it my duty to lose no time in acquainting the Lord High Admiral of Russia with the existence of that terrible engine of naval warfare which your Government has in its possession."

Khalil appeared to reflect profoundly for some minutes; and then he said, as if suddenly arriving at a conclusion, "Yes, you may make your Government acquainted with the existence of the submarine boat. Nay, more—you may even state that inasmuch as the experiment has been tried in the waters of the Golden Horn, and the promised result has been fully attained by the explosion of an old transport vessel moored for the purpose, the Captain Pasha has ordered several similar submarine boats to be built, and Turkey will henceforth use them in naval warfare. If I tell you all this," continued Khalil—"and if I give you free permission to report the same to your own Government—it is for the sake of humanity, and for no other reason."

"I understand you—and I thank you!" replied the lieutenant, "But you, Signor, must be a young gentleman of no humble authority that you should be in possession of the means of conveying signals which are so promptly obeyed,"

"There are circumstances," replied Khalil, "which give me that authority;"—but it was now with a reserved tone and look that he spoke, as if to forbid any further questioning.

Meanwhile those on board the

caïque beheld the galley again approaching from the frigate ; and great was their joy on perceiving what Khalil was on board that boat. They nevertheless continued to be mystified as to the meaning of several signals which Khalil had let off, and to be bewildered by conjectures how they could have possibly served his purpose. In the course of a few minutes the galley ran alongside the caïque ; and then the Russian lieutenant said to Khalil, "Will you convey to his Excellency the Pasha, to those ladies, and to those Greek gentlemen the assurances of my regret for the ill-treatment they have experienced?"

"I will do so," replied Khalil. "And now farewell."

He shook hands with the lieutenant, and then leaped into the caïque.

"I will not insult you, signor," said the Russian officer, "by asking if my frigate be now in safety?"

"It is in safety!" exclaimed the young Turk: and at the same moment another detonating ball exploded with a sharp crack, the fleecy vapour curling up into the evening air.

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### THE VAZIER OF THE CUPOLA.

**M**OST cordial was the welcome which Khalil received from the friends whom he now rejoined on board the caïque; and he found an opportunity to fling an endearing look upon Zuleika without being perceived by Ismilda. The black slaves stretched their arms to their oars, propelling the caïque in one direction—while the Russian galley glided still more rapidly in the opposite

direction—namely, on its return to the frigate.

As the reader may suppose, the young Turk was overwhelmed with questions as to all that had happened to him—how he had been treated—what meant the signals of the explosive balls—and by what means he had effected his liberation?

"It were a long story to tell," answered Khalil: "but a few words will suffice to satisfy your curiosity. Some little while ago it happened to come to my knowledge that a French Engineer, endowed with some genius but with a far greater amount of theoretical enthusiasm, submitted to the Ottoman Government a scheme for blowing up an entire fleet in the space of a few hours. Some experiments were made; but it was found that the Frenchman's plan could not be carried out: it was beautiful as a theory but impossible to be reduced to practice. Nevertheless, to read or hear verbal description of it, could not fail to make an impression upon the mind—and even to produce a sensation of awe and dismay. Of my knowledge of those circumstances, I just now availed myself. But there is another thing which I must mention. Being fond of chemical combinations, I some little while back amused myself in making combustible balls: and I happened to have a few of them about my person just now. Thus by using these balls as if they were signals and by representing to the two superior officers of that frigate that they *were* signals for the purpose of invoking to my aid the Frenchman's terrible invention, I effected two purposes—"

"Your liberation was evidently one," said Daltabn Pasha "But the other?"

"I will tell your lordship," answered Khalil. "It is for the in-

terest of Turkey that peace should be concluded with Russia; and whosoever can give a favourable impulse to the negotiations now in progress between the two powers is rendering a service to his Imperial Majesty the Sultan and to the cause of humanity itself. Such a service I believe it has just proved my lot to afford. The officers of that frigate will lose no time in reporting to their Government that the Ottoman naval administration is in possession of the most terrific engines of warfare: and I feel well convinced that the wild extravagant tale which I told with every appearance of grave and even awe-felt solemnity will lose nothing of its startling effects in being repeated elsewhere. Ah! behold!—the ‘Ivan the Terrible’ is setting its sails. Hark! they are weighing anchor! The officer in command is losing no time in his return to his own country, that he may make his report of the wondrous and terrible intelligence which by accident he has obtained.”

All who listened to Khalil were struck with this additional proof which recent incidents had afforded of that calm intrepidity that never failing self-possession, and that readiness of wit which made him in a moment equal any emergency that he might be called upon to encounter. By this extraordinary aptitude for availing himself of means that were perfectly natural, and in some respects simple enough, he appeared to wield a power which savoured of the preternatural. Daltaban Pasha, glancing at the talismanic ring which was on Khalil's finger surveyed him with mingled curiosity and respect: the two Greeks looked upon him with fervid admiration: Ismilda bent upon him furtive glances that were full of a devouring passion: Gulnare and Thyrza considered

him to be most extraordinary young man of whom they had ever heard—and perhaps they would have also considered that he was the most interesting, were it not that they so devotedly loved Lucas and Julian. As for Zuleika—the amiable, the beautiful, and the intelligent Zuleika—she felt that the more she saw of Khalil, the more she loved him, and that every fresh incident was calculated to develop some new phase of intrepidity, genius and self-possession on the part of him whom she so much admired.

The caique was moving onward in the direction of the Pasha's villa, and there seemed to be no intention on the part of his lordship to observe on the present occasion that extreme caution which he had previously adopted—namely, in respect to concealing as much as possible the sojourn of the three young men at his country dwelling. But Khalil had his own reason for separating himself for a few minutes from the rest of the party. He accordingly whispered to the Pasha, “Your lordship had better suffer the Greeks and myself to land here, so that we may retrace our way to the villa, unobserved by stranger eyes.”

“True!” said Daltaban; “and thanks, my dear young friend, for this foresight on your part. I had well-nigh forgotten that caution which it is seemly to use. But hasten you to the villa: for your garments hang wet upon you after that immersion—and you need a change.”

The caique put into the shore at a distance of about a quarter of a mile from the picturesque little villa. Khalil and the two Greeks landed; and the elegantly painted boat then pursued its way over the waters, which were still brilliantly lighted by the declining sun.



"This has been a day of adventure," said Lucas Vassilo to Khalil, as the three young gentlemen struck into the fields so as to take the nearest path towards the rear of the grounds belonging to the villa.

"Yes," said the young Turk; "in a few hours many incidents have been accumulated. But you must pardon me if I again have you for a few minutes, as I did in the morning. I shall rejoin you presently: you can tarry for me in the garden, so that we may enter the house together."

Lucas and Julian asked their young friend no questions; and he temporarily parted from them. He sped towards that grove which has already been described in the vicinage of the Pasha's pleasure-grounds and scarcely had he plunged into this shade, when he was met by his faithful dependant Sadak.

"Have you procured me the article which I ordered you to obtain at the chemist's?" inquired the young Turk.

"It is here, my lord," responded Sadak; and he placed a small packet in his master's hand.

"And now what tidings of Mesrour?" demanded Khalil.

"Alas, my lord! I have none to impart," returned Sadak.

"And yet he is in the neighbourhood," said Khalil. "At no great distance hence—in yonder direction—did I myself behold him. I pursued him—but he escaped me, afterwards he was seen again—indeed he committed an outrage towards a member of the Pasha's family—"

"It is impossible, my lord," interjected Sadak, "that he can much longer remain at large."

"There is no further need," said Khalil, "for you to remain in this grove. All my plans will be frustrated unless Kara Mesrour be captured. Sadak," continued

the young Turk, impressively. "you have suffered him to escape you once—and you must repair this fault. Go you yourself, with a strong party of followers, and beat all the woods in yonder direction. Close not your eyes in slumber—lay not yourself down to rest, until Kara Mesrour be a prisoner in the Castle of the Seven Towers."

"Gracious lord," responded Sadak, "your command is sufficient. No rest will I take until Kara Mesrour be a prisoner. Has your lordship any farther instructions for your humble but faithful slave?"

"Yes," answered Khalil: "listen attentively. You must now repair to Constantinople to procure a strong party of followers, as well as horses, for the expedition with which I have charged you. But you will find five minutes' leisure to repair to the Keis Effendi.\* Tell his lordship to throw as much delay as possible into the negotiations with Russia, for that something has occurred which in a few days will most probably produce its effect. The Russian Government will prove itself more willing than it has as yet been to treat with Turkey; and the Keis Effendi may with his wonted diplomatic ingenuity avail himself thereof. Depart!—be expeditious—and remember that great shall be your reward if you succeed in capturing that vile Ethiopian, Kara Mesrour."

Sadak bowed submissively, and at once plunged deeper into the grove, to give his orders to the other slaves whom he had waiting there at his disposal. Khalil lingered for a few moments to examine the chemical substance which was contained in the packet that had been placed in his hand; and then he sped to rejoin the

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\* Minister of Foreign Affairs.

two Greeks whom he found waiting for him in the garden. They entered the villa together; and Khalil, on reaching his own chamber, found a large variety of rich and costly garments placed there, so that he might avail himself of a comfortable substitute for his own damp clothing.

"When he had changed his raiment Khalil again examined the packet which Sadak had placed in his hand, and now a small billet, folded up into a very narrow compass, dropped out. The handwriting was that of female, and was beautifully fluent. Khalil recognised it at once: an expression of the utmost astonishment appeared upon his countenance; and he ejaculated, "Ah! what in the name of the Prophet can this mean?"

He then opened the billet, and hastily ran his eyes over the contents. That expression of astonishment expanded into one of mingled pity and indignation; and he exclaimed, 'Is it possible? such a terrific sacrifice as this?'

The young Turk paced to and fro in his chamber for several minutes: then he stood still and reflected profoundly. He was startled from his meditations by the opening of the door; and looking round he beheld Daltaban Pasha. Thrusting the billet, together with the small packet containing the chemical preparation into the breast of his garments. Khalil assumed his wonted looks—while the Pasha advanced towards him with a smiling countenance.

"My dear young friend," he said—"for so you have permitted me to call you—and so I esteem you——"

"To be sure!" ejaculated Khalil: and why not? Am not I—a comparatively humble individual—honoured by being thus addressed by one of your lordship's exalted rank——"

"And more exalted," interrupted Daltaban, "than it was an hour back. My illustrious master the Sultan, the glorious Padishah, Vicegerent of Allah upon earth has been pleased to appoint me a Vizier of the Cupola—a Councillor of the Divan——"

"Then permit me," said Khalil, taking the Pasha's hand, "to be one of the first to congratulate your Highness on receiving the title by which I now address you."

"It is not that I am proud of the title of Highness," said Daltaban—"I mean not unduly proud; for the titles of Lordship and Excellency were already honourable and distinguished enough: but since it is the will of his Imperial Majesty thus to lavish benefits upon his humble servant, I am bound to accept all these rewards, even though I should sink beneath their weight."

While the Pasha was thus speaking, Khalil's features grew profoundly pensive, even to mournfulness: but the newly created Vizier of the Cupola (or assistant councillor to the Grand Vizier) beheld not that desponding expression on the part of his young friend; for, notwithstanding the modesty with which he had just now spoken with reference to his new dignity, he was as elate and proud as a child in his holiday attire.

"Ah!" said Khalil, suddenly resuming his wonted demeanour: "you speak of lavish bounties which are being conferred upon your Highness? Perhaps some other great boon has been bestowed in addition to the rank of a Privy Councillor?"

"Yes—it is so, Signor Khalil," responded the Pasha. "But has not the time come when you and I can have a little private discourse together: and when you will throw off all mystery——"

"What means your Highness,"

## THE LOVES OF THE HAREM

asked Khalil, with a look of bewilderment which, if affected, was at all events so natural in its appearance that his Highness Daltaban Pasha was staggered and evidently knew not what to say nor think.

"My dear friend Khalil," he at length stammered forth, "you must confess that I have every reason for supposing—that is you know, I have every right to imagine—I mean that circumstances—"

"Ah! if your Highness speaks as well as this," exclaimed Khalil, smiling, "when taking your seat in the Divan, you will stir up the impatience of even the gravest and most solemn of all the Counsellors.

"True, my dear young friend!" observed Daltaban. "I know that I was not particularly lucid at the moment: I was about to approach a subject—But that ring!" and he touched the talisman on Khalil's finger, at the same time bending upon his countenance a significant look. "There is that ring—then there are all the strange mysterious things you have done—the power you seem to wield—the manner in which you dealt with the revolted Janizaries—the way in which you this evening reduced the Russians to submission—in a word my dear Khalil, there must be something—"

"Did I not tell your Highness on the first evening we ever met," interrupted the young Turk, "that this ring is my secret?" It is in respect to *this* only that I observe any mystery. I told you at the time how I dealt with the Aga of the Janizaries: I told you likewise ere now in what manner I dealt with the Russian officers on board that frigate. I am no more than what I represented myself the first evening you found me beneath your roof: but I am rich, my lord—I am de-

scended from a good family—and I hope that when the day comes on which I shall demand your niece's hand of her sire the Kadiasker, I may be deemed worthy the possession of that inestimable treasure."

"By the Prophet!" cried Daltaban; "were Zuleika my daughter, I would bestow her upon you at once; and so far as my consent as her uncle is useful, you have it a thousand times over. But have you forgotten that a terrible danger hangs over the head of her sire the Kadiasker?"

"Alas! I have not forgotten it!" replied Khalil: "but let us hope for the best."

"The time is growing short," observed Daltaban; "and if the worst should happen, methinks poor Zuleika will be but little fitted for a bridal ceremony."

"Let us not talk of the subject now," said Khalil; "but let us put our faith in the goodness of Allah and the intercession of his Prophet Mahommed. Besides, your Highness is disposed, I see, to make merry this evening—"

"In good sooth, a banquet is being prepared," replied Daltaban, "to celebrate not only my nomination to the dignity of Vizier of the Cupola—but likewise—"

"Ah! I recollected your Highness hinted that there were other bounties which his Majesty the Sultan has conferred upon you, and which you have not as yet named to me."

"I have no secrets, my dear Khalil, from so admirable and much-loved a young friend as yourself. When I spoke of certain matters just now," continued the Pasha,—"I mean when I appeared to hint that there might be mysteries surrounding you—"

"Take me as I am—nothing more nor less than what I declared myself to be the first night we

ever met—Khalil Osman, descended from the Beys of Karmania.”

“Well, be it so,” ejaculated the newly created Vizier of the Cupola. “I had fancied something else; a suspicion had hovered in my mind: but still—Well, be it so! Of course you are what you say—and if you were aught different you could no longer have any reason for concealing it. Now, my dear young friend, I have sought your apartment on the present occasion for three or four motives. In the first place, I was anxious to communicate the circumstance that on landing from the caique I found the imperial messenger waiting to place in my hands the despatch announcing my elevation to the dignity of Vizier of the Cupola. In the second place, it was my purpose to invite you—and which invitation will be extended to our two Greek friends—to this little banquet which I have ordered to be prepared to celebrate my elevation—and—also—”

“Yes, doubtless the other boons which have been conferred upon your Highness?” added Khalil.

“Precisely so,” said the Pasha. “But then I had another motive in seeking you at this moment. The fact is that though now a Vizier of the Cupola, and consequently recognised as a man possessing some little wisdom, yet do I need your advice on a very important and delicate point—But stop! I am going a little too fast. I had *another* motive in coming to you, and this I had better first explain.”

“Proceed, my lord,” said Khalil.

“You see, my dear young friend,” continued the Pasha, “this distinction of Vizier is conferred upon me as a reward for suppressing the insurrection of the Janizaries by the mere terror

of my advance at the head of the troops which remained faithful to the Imperial cause. Of course I have not forgotten the amount of service you rendered on the occasion: but inasmuch as you have kept yourself in the background with so much becoming modesty, I have been compelled to accept all the honours attending that night’s adventures.”

“And most worthily do they sit upon your Highness,” answered Khalil.

“Then again,” proceeded Daltaban, “I have not forgotten that in this afternoon’s adventure with the Russians you bore your part most nobly: your intelligence in arranging the plan of defence—your intrepidity in carrying it out—and then the self-sacrificing magnanimity with which you went on board the Russian ship for the purpose of ensuring the safe liberation of the prisoners—all, everything merit my utmost commendation. I am looking to see in what manner I can possibly recompense you. Tell me, my dear Khalil,—how could I testify my regard—my esteem—I might almost say my affection?”

“I never ask favours for myself,” responded Khalil: “but I never refuse them when proffered by those who have the means of bestowing them—because by accepting them on behalf of others, I am often enabled to do good to those who may require assistance from the great and the powerful.”

“I do not quite understand you, my young friend,” said the Pasha, looking bewildered.

“The explanation shall be speedily given to your Highness,” resumed Khalil. “Your lordship has just offered to bestow upon me any boon which I may in reason ask: for such I take to be the meaning of the bounteous proffer?”

"Exactly so," responded Daltaban.

"I accept that proffer," proceeded Khalil: "and yet it is not for myself that I accept it—it must be for some other. But when you have conferred it, although upon the veriest stranger—as indeed it is most likely to be—it will be as highly esteemed by me as if bestowed upon myself."

"And of what nature is this boon?" asked Daltaban Pasha, still somewhat confused and bewildered by the explanations.

"Ah! of that I have not yet bethought me!" ejaculated Khalil. "Let me reflect. What shall it be?—what can I ask?"

"Gold," suggested the Pasha; "seeing that it is not for yourself."

"No," replied Khalil, as if thoughtfully. "A worthless person may ask it; and therefore should I be the means of conferring pecuniary benevolence where it is not merited."

"The hands of my daughters for your two Greek friends," exclaimed Daltaban, "before the arrival of the messengers I have sent to hold communion with their parents."

"No," answered the young Turk: "because that were to induce your Highness to take a rash step, which with the ordinary prudence of a father you would not otherwise think of."

"Then shall I write or send to Zuleika's parents at once," asked Daltaban, "and beseech on your behalf their immediate consent?"

"Not so, my lord" interrupted Khalil; "because—it may be vanity or it may only be a manly confidence—but still I feel convinced that by resting my suit on its own merits, I am enabled to prosecute it successfully for myself."

"By the Prophet, my young friend!" ejaculated the Pasha. "I have exhausted all the suggestions which I have it in my power

to offer. I am resolved to have my way by testifying my mingled gratitude, admiration and friendship towards you; and therefore I must insist that you name some boon."

"Be it so," said Khalil: "and therefore that the best thing I can do under existing circumstances, is to name the very first thing which enters my head. I believe, my lord, that the fair sex are more frequently made the victims of wrong and evil-doing than persons of our sex: and therefore would I demand of you that you swear by Allah and his Prophet to grant the very first boon which shall be sought at your hands by any female, however lowly or however high her degree—excepting only the ladies of your own household, towards whom as a husband, and as a father—I will say as an uncle likewise, for I am making no exception in favour of Zuleika—your Highness ought not to be solemnly pledged."

"Your demand is romantic, Signor Khalil," answered Daltaban; but still I ought not to be surprised, considering all I have seen of your disposition. Still less am I annoyed—inasmuch as there is a chivalrous magnanimity as well as a novelty in your demand, and therefore I accede to your request. How runs the vow? That I swear by Allah and his Prophet I will grant the first boon which is sought of me by any female, however low or high her degree, with the exception of my wife, my daughters, and my niece.

"And I thank your Highness for the pledge thus solemnly given," responded Khalil,—"too solemnly given to be lightly broken!" he impressively added.

"I should consider, my young friend," rejoined the Pasha, "that I was dishonouring the grave of my father, as well as dealing my

own beard, eating dirt, and heaping ashes upon my head, if I were to violate this oath which I have taken. But right glad am I that you made an exception on behalf of Ismilda: for methinks that she will soon have some reason to persecute me with her demands on a certain point—and it is in this respect that I so materially need your counsel."

"Speak, my lord," returned Khalil; "although I can scarcely flatter myself that I shall be enabled to advise one whose years and experience are so superior to my own."

"On the contrary," said the Pasha "methinks that from all I have seen of your intelligence, you are more capable of counselling me than the learned Grand Mufti or the sacred Sheikul-Islam himself. The truth is my dear Khalil," continued the Pasha, "the title of Vizier of the Cupola is not the only honour which the glorious Padishah has deigned to bestow upon me: but his Imperial Majesty has been pleased to intimate it to be his will and pleasure to accord me the hand of his most beautiful and accomplished daughter, the Princess Fatima, in marriage."

"Proceed, my lord" said Khalil. "I see not as yet how your Highness requires my counsel."

Daltaban had looked very hard at Khalil while he was thus speaking; but the young Turk seemed to listen to the intelligence with no particular degree of interest—though he bowed as if in congratulation on account of this new honour which the Pasha was to receive.

"As a matter of course," continued Daltaban, "I have never yet seen her Imperial Highness the Princess Fatima: but it is totally impossible she can be otherwise than beautiful and accomplished. Her age, I believe,

is about three-and-twenty. Verily it is a great mark of favour and condescension on the part of his Imperial Majesty the Sultan—and all the greater inasmuch as it is so rare for an Ottoman sovereign to bestow a sister or daughter on a State Dignitary who already has a wife living. But then, my dear Khalil, the Princess Fatima will become complete mistress of all my household establishments—of all my family and my slaves—nay, more, my wife Ismilda and my daughters—at least until the latter are married—who become slaves to her Imperial Highness. This is the etiquette to be observed in such circumstances: but between you and me, my dear Khalil, I am afraid poor Ismilda will be terribly vexed, and that there will be a frightful scene when I break the intelligence to her. Of course"—and here the Pasha drew himself up with all his dignity—"my will is law with my wife Ismilda, as well as with my children and my slaves: but it is not the less unpleasant to stand the chance of having a scene of tears, and sobs, and lamentations, and ineffectual entreaties—particularly when I have been accustomed to humour Ismilda somewhat—to let her see that I love her—and—and—I scarcely know what term to use—but—but—methinks I have been at times a little too uxorious."

"But how can I possibly assist your Highness?" asked Khalil.

"I scarcely know," responded Daltaban. Unless perhaps—and I think it was this that was passing in my mind—you would not object to break the intelligence to Ismilda—"

"I, my lord?" ejaculated Khalil, as if with profound astonishment.

"By the Prophet, and why not?" exclaimed the Pasha. "Are you not in love with Zuleika? and do you not mean to marry her? It is

true I have said nothing to my wife on this subject—because I recollect—that you said it would be better not, and you gave some excellent reason at the time: but still it is a fact that your purpose to espouse Zuleika—and such being the case, there is no harm in your acting this friendly part and paying brief visit to the lady Ismilda before the banquet begins. Your eloquence is so persuasive—and then too you are so full of expedients—in a word, my dear Khalil, I beseech you to confer this favour upon me, in order that you may convince Ismilda of the impropriety and the uselessness of getting up a scene which would only expose herself, make me look ridiculous, and spoil my appetite for the banquet which is about to take place.

"After all your Highness has said," replied Khalil, "it would be most ungracious on my part to refuse the little service which you think I may render you. Besides, your Highness has so lately promised to fulfil that boon which I besought at your hands—"

"Truel" ejaculated Daltaban "and I have sworn by Allah and the Prophet!"

"I go at once to wait upon her ladyship" said Khalil: "but your Highness will be good enough to order Amina to conduct me into the lady Ismilda's presence. And I may be excused, if I add that Amina should be bidden to remain upon the threshold of the apartment the whole time; so that the tongue of scandal may never have the faintest reason for speaking lightly of her ladyship.

"It shall be all done as you suggest," rejoined the newly created Vizier. "Come with me—and accept beforehand my thanks for the service you are about to render."

They passed out into the passage; and it happened that Amina

was descending the stairs of the upper storey at the time. Daltaban summoned her; and as the old woman approached, he said, "Conduct Signor Khalil to her ladyship's apartments; he has some communication of importance to make to your mistress, As a matter of course," added the Pasha, as if with an air of careless indifference, "you will be careful to tarry upon the threshold during the interview. Not but that I know my Ismilda to be the very rose of virtue, the lily of purity, and the pink of bashfulness—that aloe of the female sex which only blooms once in a hundred years. Likewise do I know my young friend Khalil to be a perfect model of chivalrous propriety. Nevertheless, the harem is sacred—it must have its protection—and care must ever be taken to avoid affording scope for the venomous whispers of scandal."

His Highness, having thus spoken turned away towards the chambers of the two young Greeks for the purpose of inviting them also to the banquet, and Khalil accompanied Amina towards Ismilda's apartments. The old woman was curious to know what business Khalil had either pre-empted, or else had really found, in order to obtain this interview, with the Pasha's wife: but she put no questions—and the young Turk did not gratify her curiosity.

The suite of apartments was reached: Amina opened the door: and ushered Khalil into the splendidly furnished drawing-room where the Lady Ismilda was reclining to her wont, in luxurious indolence upon the flocculent cushions. She had changed her toilet since the boating excursion: and certainly looked most ravishingly beautiful, if Khalil could really in his heart be smitten by her charms. She uttered an ejaculation of delight on

perceiving him, and at once made an impatient sign for Amina to retire. But the young Turk exclaimed, "Stop! His Highness has sent me hither—he bade Amina remain——Indeed she must post herself upon that threshold: for it is more than probable that his lordship will make his appearance shortly,"

Ismilda pouted her beautiful red lips with vexation; and then flinging a quick look of inquiry upon Khalil, she whispered, "This is a device of yours—is it not?—in order to come to me for a particular purpose?"

"Yes—I have the poison!"—he responded, also speaking in a whisper: so that throughout the conversation which now took place, Amina, who remained upon the threshold between the drawing-room and the ante-room, could not catch a single syllable. "I made it, or rather eliminated and crystallized the essence the moment I came in after the excursion: and then at the very time that I was thinking how I could possibly devise an excuse or find the means of obtaining an interview with you, my charming Ismilda—the Pasha came and entrusted me with a mission."

"A mission? and from the Pasha to me?" said Ismilda, in astonishment. "But, ah, dearest Khalil!" she immediately added, with a smile so ineffably sweet, so tender, so loving, that a stranger would have deemed it impossible so charming a face could belong to one who possessed so black a heart,—"I understand it all!—this is a device of yours to obtain the interview with me——"

"No, my dear Ismilda, interrupted Khalil: "it is positively and actually as I tell you. Perhaps you have heard that the Pasha received the rank of

Vizier of the Cupola, with the title of Highness?"

"Yes—of that I am aware. The messenger came ere now—the news quickly spread throughout the villa. The Pasha," continued Ismilda, immediately sent off a slave to the mansion in Constantinople to order all the materials for a sumptuous banquet to be sent down to the villa."

"Yes—and to which banquet myself and our Greek friends are invited. But although you have heard of the Pasha's elevation to a higher rank, you have yet to learn that the Sultan intends him an honour——"

"What is it, dear Khalil?" asked Ismilda. "So much preparation would appear to herald intelligence but little agreeable to myself. And yet," she immediately added, in a still softer whisper, so that Amina, who was standing on the threshold, could not possibly catch the words which she was uttering; "what matters it to me—to us—since we have in our power the means of ensuring our happiness at whatsoever date we ourselves may choose to define? And now for your explanation."

"After what you have just said," responded Khalil, "I need not utter another syllable of preface—I need not take a circuitous route to arrive at the point. Suffice it therefore to say that the Sultan has deigned to promise the hand of his daughter Fatima to his Highness Daltaban Pasha."

For an instant an expression diabolically fierce flitted over the countenance of Ismilda; so that during this single instant she had the appearance of a fallen angel at the very time when hurled down from the empyrean realm to the gulf Pandemonium below. And then with a smile of scorn, which was the transition-phase whereby her features regained their naturally soft sensuous



sweetness of aspect—she said, “But it matters not! It becomes a question of how quickly must be precipitated the catastrophe that is to seal our happiness.”

“Be not too precipitate,” responded Khalil; “or else shall we draw down danger upon our own heads. Use these crystals cautiously;”—and he thrust the paper containing them into her hand.

Again did that diabolic expression flit over Ismilda’s countenance as her hand grasped the paper of crystals: and then she murmuringly inquired, “If it were arranged that he should live a week, what quantity would it be needful to administer once a day?”

“A piece of the size of a clove, so administered in a goblet of wine, or in any other beverage will suffice:”—and having thus spoken, Khalil averted his countenance for an instant with an irrepressible as well as indescribable loathing.

“I understand,” said Ismilda. “In eight days hence, my beloved Khalil, we shall be alone to enjoy all the happiness which love and riches can give us—Unless indeed this marriage with the Sultan’s daughter is to be solemnized previously! In which case,” she added, significantly, “rest assured that it shall not be solemnized at all!”

“But I have not yet fully explained,” resumed Khalil, “the mission with which his Highness the Pasha entrusted me. It is not merely to communicate the honour which the Sultan has reserved for him—but to represent that you, Ismilda, would do well to wear a smiling aspect—”

“Trust me, dearest Khalil! I will appear more fond and tender—more devoted than ever, to that husband whom I neverthe-

less loathe and detest—but of whom I shall full soon be rid!”

“I may not tarry with you any longer for the present, dearest Ismilda,” said Khalil: “his Highness awaits me.”

“One word—and only one word!” whispered the Pasha’s wife. “You are sure that you experience no remnant of affection for Zuleika?—you are confident that you love me alone?”

“Do not doubt it,” replied Khalil. “Whatsoever you may behold in my conduct, never mistrust me! And now, dearest Ismilda, I leave you for the present. Anon we shall meet at the banquet.”

With these words the young Turk started up from his seat by Ismilda’s side; and he hastened from the apartment—Amina conducting him forth. In the passage he encountered Daltaban Pasha, who was impatiently awaiting his presence; and Khalil speedily gave his Highness those assurances which he conceived would be most satisfactory and agreeable.

“And now,” said Daltaban, when he had expressed his thanks for what he believed to be the young Turk’s most generous as well as successful intervention, “I am off at once to Constantinople. Another messenger from the Sultan has just arrived. I am to repair to the Imperial Palace to receive from the lips of the Princess Fatima herself the gracious assurance that she will cheerfully bestow her hand upon me. I take with me costly gifts and valuable presents: my absence cannot be protracted beyond a couple of hours; and then on my return we will celebrate all these happy occurrences with a grand banquet.”

Khalil wished the Pasha all possible happiness in his new matrimonial venture: but as he

turned somewhat abruptly away, there was a singular expression of mingled scorn and triumph upon the young Turk's countenance—an expression which almost immediately disappeared, and which passed totally unobserved by the Pasha. Khalil rejoined his two Greek friends; and they spent a couple of hours in discourse, awaiting the return of the Pasha—which would be the signal for the banquet.

At the end of that interval of two hours—it being now about nine o'clock in the evening—a black slave somewhat abruptly entered the room where Khalil was discoursing with the Greeks: and making the usual low salaam, the menial said, "Please you, signor, 'his Highness the Pasha requests your immediate presence in his own apartment.'"

Khalil at once followed the slave, who conducted him to a room, where the young Turk found Daltaban seated upon the sofa with a most lugubrious countenance, and looking the very picture of mingled bewilderment and distress.

"Has aught happened to your Highness?" inquired Khalil, with an air of the most friendly concern.

"Young man," replied the Pasha, without raising his look from the floor; "at first I thought you had come like a good genie to my house: but now methinks you are an evil genie—that is to say, if you are really what you profess to be—Khalil Osman, descendant of the Beys of Karmania."

"I am that same Khalil Osman," rejoined the young Turk. "But how have I forfeited the esteem of your Highness?"

"Khalil, my marriage is at an end!" replied Daltaban: "the Princess Fatima is as much lost

to me as if she had suddenly ceased to exist."

"Lost to your Highness?" ejaculated the young Turk, with an air of astonishment. "How so, my lord?"

"The message which his Imperial Majesty the Sultan was graciously pleased to forward me ere now," resumed the Pasha, "gave me every hope that I should find her Imperial Highness the Princess Fatima most favourable to the suit which I had to proffer. With this hope I reached the palace. His Majesty the Sultan received me in his private cabinet; and there I deposited the gifts which I had brought. His Majesty summoned his daughter,—who came attended by a bevy of female slaves—her Highness and those slaves being all closely veiled. The Sultan withdrew, and I remained as it were alone with the Princess—for the slaves were drawn up at the farther extremity of the apartment. Then conceive my astonishment, O Khalil! when I was about to fall at the feet of her Imperial Highness, she bade me remain standing—and the next instant she was at my feet!"

"Kneeling at your feet, my lord?" ejaculated Khalil, again with an air of perfect astonishment.

"Yes—it is even as I tell you," responded the Pasha. "But, oh! astonishment upon astonishment! Her Highness began to weep bitterly—she besought me to have mercy upon her—to save her from the sacrifice of her heart's best feelings which would have to be made if she became my bride! She assured me of her respect—said a great many flattering things in reference to my martial reputation:—but—but—she declared she could not possibly love me—because she already loved another!"

"Poor Fatima!" murmured Khalil to himself: and then he said quickly, "Proceed, my lord. What followed?"

"I know not how to answer," continued Daltaban; "the Sultan's promise was equivalent to a mandate which both the Princess and myself must alike obey—or at least such was the thought which I harboured at the time, and then, to marry the Sultan's daughter!—and she with such an exquisitely beautiful figure!—doubtless with a face of corresponding loveliness—although I could not obtain a glimpse of it through the veil—Ah! how was it possible to forego such pride—such happiness—such joy? Her Highness redoubled her entreaties; and I confess, Khalil, that I was on the point of rejecting them when all of a sudden a thought darted in unto my mind. It was as the lightning-flash—searing, blighting, withering all my hopes!"

"And that thought" asked Khalil.

"That thought?" repeated the Pasha, gloomily. "It was the recollection of the vow I had pledged to you!"

"Ah! the vow!" said Khalil. "But you forced it upon me—you bade me ask some boon—I specified the first which struck me as being suitable for me to demand and for your Highness to grant—"

"And it is that now, Khalil," rejoined Daltaban, "which has lost me Fatima! She was kneeling at my feet—she was pleading her cause—I was about to remonstrate—yes, indeed, to reject her entreaty—when all in an instant that sacred pledge of mine flashed to my recollection as I have just said. I had sworn by Allah and his Prophet to grant the first boon which should be demanded of me by any female, whether of high or low

degree. Well, Khalil," added the Pasha. "I kept my vow—but I have lost Fatima!"

"And infinite must be the satisfaction of your Highness," said the young Turk, "that heaven should have put you to a test which has resulted completely to your advantage."

Daltaban reflected for a few moments: then suddenly seizing our young hero's hand he said "You are right. Khalil—you are right. Pardon me if for an instant I seemed inclined to be morose and sullen with you! Yes—I have acted kindly towards the Princess, and religiously in respect to my vow! Her Imperial Highness overwhelmed me with the expressions of her gratitude: I devised some excuse which his Majesty the Sultan deigned to accept—I believe that I pleaded the great inequality of our years—and then I returned hither, moody and miserable at first—but now well inclined to enjoy myself at the banquet which is provided."

A few minutes afterwards the Pasha, his family, and guests were seated at the banqueting-table. Although for so small a number of persons, the repast was most copious—the materials at the same time being elegant and delicate. The champagne corks flew; and presently the Pasha besought Khalil to favour the company with one of his interesting narratives.

The young Turk was more than ever anxious to comply with the Pasha's request, inasmuch as he considered that his Highness deserved some little indemnification for the loss of the Princess Fatima: and our hero accordingly commenced the ensuing romance of Ottoman history.

ded along with fearful rapidity towards the broad bosom of the Mediterranean.

Every moment the violence of the storm increased. The cordage rattled, and the wind whistled shrilly amongst the rigging, in dread concert with the roaring of the main. Even amidst the darkness of a night which was not irradiated by a single star, was the white foam visible to those who glanced over the side of the vessel, as the crested billows rolled rapidly along. The galley shipped several heavy seas; but the men worked vigorously at their employment of baling out the water by means of buckets, which were slung by ropes from the yards into the waist of the vessel;—and the gallant bark rode bravely over the waves.

Nearly three hours had passed away since the rudder was broken from its place by the fury of the billows; and still the two passengers remained upon the deck. The youth clung to his companion: and the latter from time to time inquired affectionately if his adherent would not retire to the cabin. But Henry insisted upon staying with his master; and as this individual persisted in meeting, face to face, the perils of the winds and waters, the poor youth was compelled to share the same resolution.

"By day-break we shall be many, many miles away from the port of our destination, Henry," observed the elder passenger, in a tone expressive of annoyance and disappointment at this untoward event; "and to me, whose time is so precious, and whose business is of such vast importance to myself and to so many others, this storm is productive of incalculable mischief."

"And is it not attended with immediate danger?" inquired Henry, after a short pause, during

which he seemed to reflect upon the observations of his companion.

"We have an excellent vessel, and plenty of sea room," returned the other; "and we may therefore be allowed to hope for a safe issue to this adventure."

"May heaven fulfil your anticipations!" murmured the youthful Henry.

At this moment the captain of the ship—who was particularly assiduous to the elder passenger, because he had paid a liberal price, without hesitation or bargaining, for himself and his young companion—accosted them with the view of endeavouring to persuade them to retire below.

"I never believe in danger so much as when I do not see it, but only know of its presence," observed the elder passenger; "and therefore in order not to give way to exaggerated alarms, I prefer remaining upon deck."

"You speak like a wise and a brave man, Signor Leizynski," said the captain. "But I need not compliment you upon your courage; it is sufficient to know that you are a Pole to be convinced of your valour."

"I thank you for the high opinion you entertain of the nation to which I am proud to belong," abruptly remarked the individual who was thus addressed by the name of Leizynski.

"Cheer up, boy," ejaculated the captain, addressing himself to Henry, the outline of whose form he could faintly distinguish, as the youth clung to his protector. "When daylight comes, we shall have a rare prospect around us. There will be nothing but the wide sea—not a spot of land on either side. You need not fear, lad—the storm will abate with the dawn of morning—and when once we have contrived to ship a new rudder, the course of the galley shall again be under our

own guidance. But was there ever such a starless night?"

The youth glanced timidly around him, as the captain uttered those last words, and was about to repose his head once more upon the breast of his companion, when something seemed to strike his view, and awaken his curiosity.

"A starless night, quoth you?" ejaculated the lad, at the expiration of a few moments; "and yet, methinks, that far away towards the east, there glitters a red light, which——"

"Ah! cried the captain: and looking in the direction indicated by the youth, he distinctly described a lustre of the hue mentioned by him.

"It is not a star—and it is not the glare of sunrise," observed Leizynski; but it becomes every moment more and more apparent."

"It may be a ship on fire!" exclaimed Henry, with a shudder, as he thought of the sufferings of those who were on board of the vessel to which he imagined so dreadful a calamity had occurred.

"Oh! no—it is not a star, nor the rising sun," cried the captain, in a hurried tone of voice! "neither is it a ship on fire. Ah! too well do I know the dread symbol which belongs to a Prince of the Sea!"

"A Prince of the Sea!" said Henry, alarmed at the manner in which the captain spoke, and ignorant of the meaning of the phrase he had repeated.

"Yes—that broad red glare, which every instant grows more plain," cried the captain, "comes from the golden lantern on the stern of a ship-of-war belonging to a Prince of the Sea—a Bey of the Ocean!"

"A Turkish cruiser!" ejaculated Leizynski, starting in such a way

that Henry was compelled to loosen his hold upon his master's cloak: "a Turkish cruiser!" he repeated. "Are you certain of what you say?"

But the captain was now no longer near his passengers. He had hurried to another part of his ship, to issue the necessary instructions preparatory to a combat, which he deemed inevitable.

In a few minutes he accosted his two passengers again, exclaiming in a hurried and anxious, but not a tremulous tone,—“Yes, I am not deceived! We are in the vicinity of a Turkish ship-of-war; and the moment the morning breaks, she will be down upon us. She is a large ship—because her red light indicates the rank of her commander—and all hope of escape, if we come in contact, is impossible! We will however fight to the death, sooner than suffer ourselves to be carried to Constantinople to work the Sultan's galleys.

"Give me a sword and pistols," cried Leizynski "and the turbaned infidels shall only step upon this deck over my body."

"You forget your assumed character of peace," meekly whispered the youthful Henry.

"Thank you for the caution, boy," returned his master, in the same low tone; and he then renewed his demand to be supplied with weapons by the captain.

"We have still some time to prepare for the conflict," returned this individual; "and be assured that we shall all sell our lives dearly. Some of my men have already tasted the sweets of the Ottoman pontoons, and would sooner die than return to them. We have four cannon and plenty of ammunition—we have, moreover, muskets and swords in abundance. The Turk is doubtless well armed—far better than

we—but our courage will go far to place us upon equal terms. At all events—I repeat, we will fight till the death!”

“Till the death,” answered Leizynski, solemnly.

“I knew that you were a brave man,” ejaculated the captain, grasping the hand of his passenger. “I cannot see your countenance—but your hand does not tremble.”

“Tremble!” cried Leizynski, in a contemptuous tone: but he checked himself, and the captain once more hurried away to another part of the ship.

“I do not yet precisely understand whom or what we have to fear,” said Henry, when he was once more alone with his master.

“My dear boy,” answered Leizynski, “we have to fear a Turkish ship-of-war, commanded by an individual who is termed a prince, or bey of the sea. He belongs to a squadron of volunteer ships, fitted out by private individuals, and serving in the naval armament of the Sultan. The Captain Pasha has, I know, lately detached many of these ships to cruise about the coasts of Dalmatia, Ragusa and the Morea, with the view of attacking Venetian and Austrian vessels.”

“The light is rapidly drawing nearer and nearer to us,” said Henry; “a combat is then inevitable!”

“And a sanguinary one it will be, Henry,” answered Leizynski. “But the moment the two ships join in battle you must go below.”

“Did my parents order me to quit your side in the day of danger?” returned the youth. “If so, I should refuse to obey them—and I love my parents. Oh! my noble—my kind—my generous patron, do not compel me to manifest the same disobedience towards you. Do not insist upon me leaving you alone in a mo-

ment when a wound—an accident might render my services acceptable—nay, even necessary.”

“You shall stay with me,” calmly observed Leizynski. “At your age——”

He stopped; for at the moment a huge wave broke over the ship, and for a few instants the vessel seemed buried in the abyss of water. But it rose again, light and buoyant, upon the surface of the billow, and still pursued its rapid path across that wide range of hill and valley—where its progress left no traces—where the mountain and the dale were perpetually changing places! And every yard, and every foot which the vessel advanced in its seedy course, brought it nearer to the broad red flame which like a beacon of evil omen, streamed from the poop of the ship commanded by the Prince of the Sea.

The grey dawn of morning streamed upon the waters of the Mediterranean, and the sun rose in all the glory which attends its visit to that portion of the world. The violence of the storm had materially abated; and although the wind still blew strongly from the north-west, and the swell of the waters was still high, the sky was almost cloudless. The deck of the galley was wet with the spray that continued from time to time to break over it; the sails were still closely reefed, the topmast was lowered, and the mariners maintained a strict watch upon the various ropes and spars that were to be shifted in case of danger. A new rudder was shipped with a considerable deal of difficulty; and after having obeyed naught but the force of the wild winds during a considerable part of the night, the gallant vessel was once more reduced beneath the control of man.

From the first moment that the

red light of the Prince of the Sea had appeared in the eastern horizon, the eyes of the crew upon the deck of the galley had never once lost sight of it. It seemed to be following, although at a considerable distance, a parallel course to that pursued by the Venetian ship: and from time to time, as was the case when it was first perceived, it approached nearer to the vessel that dreaded its ominous glare. But the restless influence of the winds soon bore it away into the distance once again: and during several tedious hours it seemed to follow the line of the horizon.

When the first light of morning beamed upon the swollen surface of that tideless ocean over which the brave Venetian bark was swiftly bounding, Leizynski and his young comrade, cast anxious eyes towards the broad red flame. As the day gradually became more bright, and as the mists of night rolled away from the presence of the effulgent sun, the red lustre grew more dim—but a tall ship appeared in its place. First, above the horizon, were seen the spars of three high masts—from the summit of the central one of which waved large volumes of the purple banner of the Bey of the Ocean; and in the midst of that standard, shining like a mass of gold, was the crescent of Islamism. Then the large sails and the huge tops became palpable to the view of those who gazed from the deck of the galley: and, lastly, was seen the gaily-painted hull of the Ottoman ship, riding over the waves which from time to time appeared to have swallowed it up. But like a cork did the vessel of the Prince of the Sea rise from the abyss to the summit of the billows; and the Venetian captain was speedily aware that this enemy was far more fleet, as well

as more powerful, than his own galley.

Leizynski glanced towards the Venetian captain, who only shook his head as he met the inquiring gaze of the Pole.

"You dread the consequences of the encounter, my friend?" said Leizynski. "Is there no alternative—and it shames me to ask the question,—save to fight yon Terrible Turk?"

"We have no alternative," answered the captain, who did not perceive the species of irony which marked the concluding portion of Leizynski's demand. "My experience tells me that we cannot escape coming in contact with the enemy, whose ship manœuvres far better than ours. I would stake a Venetian ducat to one of the worthless aspers with which yon Bey pays his corsairs that we shall shortly be compelled to fire upon a ship which has been taken from our own countrymen. No Ottoman vessel was ever capable of the manœuvres which that one performs: she has also a skilful pilot on board."

"Then since an encounter is inevitable," said Leizynski, "let us prepare for the conflict with a determination to perform our duty."

At this moment, and while the Pole was yet speaking, a volume of smoke issued from the side of the Ottoman ship: and then the din of a cannon swept across the bosom of the deep. The Venetian captain, who was determined not to display any want of courage or energy in commencing an engagement which he saw to be inevitable, immediately replied to the summons of the enemy in a similar manner. He then ordered the banner of the Venetian Republic to be hoisted; and addressed his men in a brief but appropriate speech upon the necessity of resisting the foe to

the utmost of their power. Swords, axes, and javelins were distributed amongst the crew; and as two hundred and eighty of the ship's complement were soldiers, whom the Republic of Venice had allowed to sail on board the ship for its protection in case of danger from the Ottoman cruisers or Barbary pirates, a goodly array of musketeers was drawn up on deck. The beams of the morning sun glanced brightly upon the morions and breastplates of the Venetian soldiers, who were commanded by a proveditor of the Republic of known courage and ability. This officer was also bitterly inimical to the Turks; and the dread of the Pontoons of Constantinople or Gallipoli nerve every one on board the galley with the valour of despair.

Leizynski provided himself with the heaviest broadsword he could procure in the armoury, and placed a pair of loaded pistols in his belt. He also slung an axe to his side; and, thus armed, took up his station on the prow of the vessel. The youthful Henry grasped a cutlass which the captain had presented to him; and his effeminate countenance wore a determined expression, which seemed to indicate that the powers of his mind did not altogether correspond with his appearance.

Suddenly the elder Pole turned towards the captain of the galley, who happened to be standing near him at the moment, and in a solemn tone addressed him as follows:—

"It is now eight years since Poland was delivered from the Ottoman yoke by the victory of Chochim, and that same battle procured the recall of those Turkish detachments which were marching towards the Venetian frontiers. On that great day, while Sobeiski, the King of

Poland, was combating at the head of his troops,—his Queen, the beautiful Marietta, was upon her knees in the church of the Jesuits, at Caminie. Perhaps the success of her husband was procured by her prayers. Wherefore, then, should we not now demand the protection of heaven when we are upon the eve of a great struggle for our liberties and lives?"

"A truce to prayers and preaching, Signor Pole," cried the captain, impatiently; the mere ceremony would impart a melancholy to my men that would prove fatal to us in the approaching conflict. Let them rather advance with songs and joyous shouts to the battle."

Leizynski did not make any reply to these remarks; and the captain hastened towards the spot where a group of sailors had collected near a gun.

"What! my brave men," he exclaimed "are you timid and trembling at the aspect of danger—and have you forgotten that your ship contains treasures which may become the reward of your valour? The Turkish captains invariably keep their wealth on board of their vessels; and there is a rich booty almost within our grasp. Let me, then, hear the sounds of your voices swelling in the notes of the war-song above the whistling of the wind."

"A few moments only elapsed after the captain had thus spoken ere one of the sailors to whom he had addressed himself commenced the following song, in which he was joined by his comrades in every part of the deck:—

#### VENETIAN WAR SONG.

From Isle to Isle, on the bosom wide  
Of the Mediterranean sea,  
Venetia's fleets in their glory ride,  
And teach the Turk that his  
crescent's pride  
Must bow to her banner free,



There is not a place, on that ocean's face  
Where her navies have not been,  
To chase the fleets that disturb the reign,  
Or that dare dispute the vast domain  
Of the Mediterranean Queen.

The cross and the crescent oft have met,  
On the field and the ocean's wave;  
But Venetia's sons will never forget  
That the cross has ever triumphed yet  
O'er the vanquished Moslem's grave.

When the foe is near, with a joyous cheer,  
As though 'twere a festive scene,  
Venetians haste to the glorious fight  
And combat those who dispute the right  
Of the Mediterranean Queen.

Two individuals alone, upon  
the deck of the Venetian Galley  
did not join in this song, in which  
even the soldiers united their  
voices. The cheering sounds  
echoed far across the waves; but  
while the crew thus fortified  
themselves with a species of  
artificial courage that required  
excitement and the empty boasts  
of a national air to maintain it,—  
Leizynski and his youthful com-  
panion murmured a prayer to  
that God to whom they alone  
trusted for fortitude and energy  
in the hour of danger.

In the meantime, the Turkish  
ship had manœuvred, as well as  
she was able, to lessen the dis-  
tance between herself and an  
enemy that she was resolved to  
attack. She was almost within  
pistol-shot when the Venetian  
brought their song to a conclusion;  
and the latter observed, with  
sentiments of apprehension, her  
formidable battery of sixteen  
guns, and the engines that had  
been raised upon her deck to hurl  
stones and other heavy materials  
upon that of the Christian galley.  
Before the Ottoman commander  
issued orders to bring the guns of  
his ship to bear upon the enemy  
he directed his muezzin to call  
the crew to prayers: and when  
this ceremony, which the Chris-  
tians on the other hand had dis-  
dained, had been performed, the

Prince of the Sea directed three  
of his slaves, who enacted the  
part of musicians, to seat them-  
selves upon the deck and cheer  
the spirits of the sailors with the  
martial notes of his war-song.

These commands were immedi-  
ately complied with; and ere the  
conflict began, the three slaves  
had time to sing the following  
air:—

### OTTOMAN WAR SONG

*La ilah! i il Allah!* Now the  
waves are white around us;—  
But many a league since yester-  
morn upon the rough sea found  
us,  
Our gallant bark has travers'd o'er  
the bosom of the billow,—  
The wild winds for its lullaby,  
the ocean for its pillow!

A far-off banner on the gale,  
A speck upon th' horizon clear,  
The flutter of a distant sail,  
Proclaim the foe's man's vessel near,  
The cannon and the gleaming glaive  
Are ready for the war;  
And let the chorus of the brave  
Mix with the music of the wave—  
*Ve Allah u Akbar!*

*La ilah! i il Allah!* Now the  
crescent smiles above us:—  
A glorious death prepares the way  
to realms where hours love us;  
A glorious death or victory awaits  
the true believer—  
And naught but dire disgrace  
attends the infidel deceiver!

The Captain of the Sea has spoke—  
His orders from his lips have gone;  
The thick cloud of th' artillery's smoke  
Mix with the vapours of the morn,  
The monsters of the vast profound  
Are startled by the jar  
The Moslem war cry echoes round,  
And Christians tremble at the sound—  
*Ve Allah u Akbar.*

By the time the three Turkish  
slaves, on board the ship of the  
Prince of the Sea, had brought

this martial air to a conclusion, both vessels were ready to commence the struggle of death. The Venetians began the battle by a discharge of two cannon upon their opponent; and the challenge was immediately answered by a broadside of eight from the deck of the Ottoman vessel. The soldiers in the Christian ship did terrible execution with their well sustained and skilful fire of musketry, to which the Turks could only reply at long intervals. But, on the other hand, the heavy artillery of the Mussulmans threatened in a very short time to decide the victory in favour of the crescent. The Venetian captain, trusting to the superiority of his soldiers, and perceiving that a distant warfare would speedily prove fatal to him, issued orders to prepare for a close conflict.

Leizynski was the first to leap upon the Ottoman ship: the moment the two vessels came alongside each other: and the youthful Henry followed at the heels of his beloved master. In a few minutes nearly the whole of the corps of Venetian soldiers, only a few of whom had been hitherto killed or wounded, had boarded the Ottoman warship; and the conflict became sanguinary in the extreme. The deck was strewn with turbans and morions; the clash of the scimitars upon the breastplates of the Christians, and those occasional sound of a musket, arose above the din of the ocean. Streams of blood flowed down the sides of the vessel; and a frequent splash in the waves denoted the termination of some deadly struggle in the very realm for the sovereignty of which the strife was waged. The noise of the artillery had altogether ceased the moment, Leizynski and the Venetians had boarded the enemy; and in a

quarter of an hour the Christian ship was entirely deserted. The Venetian captain, seeing that his soldiers experienced a desperate resistance at the hands of the Turks, had placed himself at the head of the sailors, and hastened to the succour of their fellow-countrymen on board the Ottoman war-ship,—where the two parties fought upon the deck, as if it were a field of battle.

In the midst of the strife, the grappling irons and chains which the Venetians had thrown into the rigging of the enemy when they came to close quarters, suddenly gave away, on account of the swell of the billows; and in a moment a considerable interval was placed between the two ships.

The Venetian vessel was empty—and the Christians had now no alternative, save to dispute the possession of the other with the Turks to the very death. There could be no compromise—the Ottoman ship must become the prey to the conquerors; and a conflict of extermination was resolved upon on either side. The Venetians fought to obtain a ship which the Ottomans were as strenuously necessitated to defend. The combat was accordingly as sanguinary and as ferocious as might be supposed under the imperative nature of the circumstances which controlled the belligerents.

Leizynski performed prodigies of valour. His weapon dashed many a sharp scimitar aside, and pierced to the heart of many a Turkish sailor. Henry himself behaved gallantly in that hour of danger and of slaughter. But the confined space upon which the battle was waged, and the closeness of the struggle, prevented the Venetian soldiers from turning the superiority of their musketry to the best advantage; and it was then, when the broad sword

had to contend against the scimitar, that the cross gave way before the power of the crescent. The Turks acquired fresh courage, as they perceived that each attack was crowned with success; and the corpses over which they stumbled on their own deck were chiefly those of the Venetian soldiers. He cries of "*Allah u Akbar!*" mingled with the groans of the dying Christians. The Prince of the Sea, who took no part in the fight, but sat cross-legged on cushions placed upon the deck, near the helm, and who was protected by a body guard of his own feudal troops—watch the prowess of his men and the rapid defeat of the Venetians with the most imperturbable coolness: and a smile only curled his lip when he saw the Christian soldiers, who had survived the onslaught, now forced towards the prow of the ship, where they immediately entrenched themselves behind the cannon.

At this moment a cry of despair burst from the lips of the Venetian captain: and every one glanced in the direction towards which his eyes were turned. The deserted Christian galley was at this period upwards of a quarter of a mile from the Turkish war-ship; and suddenly flames and thick volumes of smoke burst from the stern of the former. An inflammable machine—thrown by the Ottomans into the galley, at the commencement of the action, and which had failed to explode in the first instance—had since produced the desired result. The Venetians now saw all chance of escape cut off in that quarter; and, with the courage of despair, they resolved to make a last effort to obtain possession of the Turkish ship, or to perish in the attempt.

Their captain and Leizynski, who read the thoughts of the brave soldiers that still survived

the desperate conflict, placed themselves at the head of the gallant band, and rushed upon the Turks—who were, however, well prepared to receive them.

One of the officers of the Prince of the Sea was singled out by the brave Leizynski as a foe worthy of his sword; and a desperate combat ensued between them. The Pole at length succeeded in closing with his antagonist, and was about to compel him to succumb to superior strength, when a well-known voice called upon him for help.

The young Henry was lying upon the deck, and a savage Turk was upon the point of plunging his poniard into his breast. One glance was sufficient to make Leizynski aware of the danger experienced by the youth. He flew to the spot where assistance was so imperatively required, and laid the vanquisher of his young attendant dead at his feet; but at the same moment he received a wound in his right arm, which compelled him to drop his sword, and his former antagonist sprang upon him to exercise his right of conquest. In another instant the gallant Leizynski would have been no more, had not Henry—who had by this time risen from his recumbent posture upon the deck—in his turn saved the life of his master, by plunging a dagger into the side of the victorious Turk. Half-a-dozen Ottomans sprang upon Leizynski and the youthful Henry: and already did the moments of these brave individuals seem numbered, when a powerful arm intervened to save them from immediate destruction.

The Prince of the Sea—who had noticed all which we have just related, from his seat near the helm—now abandoned his cushions for the first time, and rushed into the thickest of the

fight, to save the lives of two warriors whose ardour and devotion to each other he could not but admire. The sailors, who were about to sacrifice Leizynski and the youth to their rage, immediately dropped their weapons on a signal from their chief, and made the two Poles prisoners. They bound them with cords and conducted them to the after-part of the ship, where they consigned them to the care of their chief-tain's body-guard.

About the same time that Leizynski and his attendant were made prisoners, the Venetian captain succumbed to numbers, and fell covered with wounds. His men defended themselves to the

last; but one by one they dropped dead upon the deck, beneath the scimitars of the Turks. At length only five were left, and they were made prisoners, in spite of the most desperate resistance, by which they vainly hoped to meet with immediate death.

Thus terminated the conflict between the Turk and the Christians on the deck of the ship belonging to the former; and, at the instant that the combat was brought to a conclusion in the manner here described, the Venetian galley disappeared from the surface of the waves, on which, shrouded in smoke and flames, it had floated for the previous half hour.

END OF VOLUME II.



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